

INFLUENCE
A MORAL TALE,
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY
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AUSTRALIA," &c.

He who acts from principle shall be exposed to no wounds but
what Religion can cure. — BLAIR.

FOURTH EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

IN offering the public a story founded on the subject of INFLUENCE, I wish the power were mine to do justice to one of so much importance; but I hope that the presumption of such an attempt will be pardoned in the circumstances which have compelled the undertaking.

Yet, to a world in which criticism justly holds a powerful barrier against all who may intrude talents incompetent for the task of authorship, some apology is surely necessary, while I seem to claim a privilege to which I can hold not the smallest pretension.

In timidly soliciting its support, therefore, I also ask the generous indulgence of such as may be jealous of the feeble spark which shall thus dare to mingle in the blaze of talent which distinguishes

this age of literature. And should the tenacious eye of criticism chance to fall upon my humble page, and demand the birth, parentage, and education of so unwarranted an intruder, I can only answer, that it is from the pen of a very young and inexperienced writer ; that necessity was its mother, and a sick room the school in which it was first reared. Compelled to seek the patronage of the public, I ask its indulgence, not its praise ; —its mercy, not its justice. But if indeed so unworthy a theme should be made one of criticism, I can but own how wide a field its many faults may open for censure ; but, so far as the ground on which Religion stands, I trust it will be found free from false principle and unwarranted prejudice ; since, in all that I have endeavoured to inculcate of faith and practice, Scripture is the authority, and the simple religion of the Gospel as it is in Jesus Christ the only chart, which I would offer to every young reader, as the sole and sure guide to Christianity and happiness.

It has often been remarked, that a work of imagination, as being a mere ideal world, ought never to bear the sacred stamp of Religion. I confess — and with reverence may I use the simile — that it is indeed too hallowed an instrument to mingle indiscriminately with the songs of fancy ; and it were

well if the rising generation were taught only to listen to such strains as might raise the soul to the enjoyment of holier contemplations. But human nature is in every age and country the same; selfish pleasures are sought with avidity both by young and old, and too often the more essential pursuits of a christian education are neglected.

If, then, a "moral tale" can be made a medium of religious instruction, as well as of recreation, at least to that class of society, in which writings of a holier character are excluded, or nearly laid aside, may not imagination legitimately blend with truth, if truth itself be not distorted or impaired by such means of communication? for, although the objections so frequently urged against it ought, from the motives of such dissent, to be respected, yet they may fairly be refuted by the many examples afforded in Holy Scripture, of fiction employed in the illustrations of Divine teaching. The writings of Isaiah, the Psalms of David, and the Revelation of St. John, abound with such; and have we not a yet higher authority for the same, in the Parables of our Lord, which embody the very essence of practical Christianity, under the guise of imagery? Only let the moral of the lesson lead to the source which sanctifies it, and imagination may surely aspire

to catch something of that holy inspiration, which, directed by the grace of God, may tend to enlighten the "eyes of the blind," and lead the ignorant to seek wisdom of the "Lord of Life."

C. A.

P R E F A C E

TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

SOME apology, perhaps, may be expected for the republication of a work which was the production of so inexperienced a writer, that the author, aware of its many deficiencies, has for some time past declined to reprint it. Recent circumstances have, however, almost compelled her consent to a renewed edition, as, in consequence of repeated demands for the work, several copies have been forwarded from America, where it was published in 1835, and where—if she be not misinformed—it is still meeting a considerable sale, from its being out of print in England. Thus urged, the author has felt it right to yield private feeling to the public wishes; and grateful for such

encouragement, she has endeavoured to correct the present edition by rendering the work more adapted to the present era of events; yet, while she ventures to hope that it may now be found in every respect really "improved," she is quite aware, that it can still be classed only with very inferior writings. The author would also avail herself of this opportunity to express her sincere acknowledgments to the reviewers, both in England and America, who have favoured her works with their notice in a tone of encouragement which cannot but be gratifying; and, under the peculiar circumstances of her authorship, such indulgence is felt to be subject of deeper thankfulness, in which she would fain recognise the hand of Him, who, through many trying vicissitudes of an eventful life, has, in every instance of her experience, ever thus "stayed his rough wind in the day of his east wind."

C. A.

Rosebank,
1845.



INFLUENCE.

CHAPTER I.

“GOOD-BYE, my pretty Tiny : when I come back to Berwyns, I shall play and run about with you again, and love you just as I do now ; I wish you were going with me, but you will be very happy with Johnson,” said little Ellen, as she caressed her favourite spaniel, who, unconscious that it was a farewell greeting, gambolled by the side of his young playfellow : while she, running from tree to tree, bade every favourite flower “good-bye,” with that light heart which did not comprehend how sadness could be attached to the idea of leaving a place of which she had seen quite enough, for a new world, where she was to meet novelty in everything. Berwyns had been her birthplace, and to that hour she had never slept

from its roof. Bred amid the wilds of Llanvair, a small village in the north of Merionethshire, she knew every shrub, stone, hill, and dale, within many miles of its neighbourhood, and now only longed to see something beyond those sweet mountains she was about to quit, perhaps for ever! Her mother's voice hastened her to the spot where everything appeared ready for their departure; but when she saw her faithful Johnson standing by the hall door with eyes full of tears, her little heart for the first time felt heavy, and forgetting all her airy castles in the regret of leaving so endeared a friend, she threw her arms affectionately round the neck of her nurse, and exclaimed half mournfully, "Dear, dear Johnson, don't cry; mamma says that you shall soon come and see us in England; and when I am grown up, I shall come again to Berwyns, and then I will give you a cow, and a pig; and you know Herbert is to bring you a great, great many things from India, for your cottage; so don't cry, for *indeed* we shall never forget you."

"Heaven grant it," was all the poor creature ventured to reply; for, being past the meridian of life, she could scarcely expect to see the years to which her darling looked forward, and now only thought of those happy days which were thus so

sadly closed ; while, for the sake of her mistress, she endeavoured to conceal how much she was affected by the present scene ; and not daring to give vent to her feelings, she silently pressed the little Ellen to her bosom, and endeavoured to hope that they were not parting for ever. Mrs. Irwyn now coming down stairs, inquired if everything were in the carriage, and desiring Ellen and Russell, the only servant who was to accompany her, to get in, she mournfully took leave of the rest, and pressing Johnson's hand, in token of her grateful remembrance and esteem, hastily followed her child, and desired the postilion to "drive on."

Poor Johnson stood with the corner of her apron in her hand, regardless of every sound but the rumbling of the wheels, as if it were sacrilege to suffer any other to disturb the deathlike silence which followed ; but when she caught the last glimpse of the carriage, and its last sound had died along the valley of St. Llenard's, she turned to the deserted hall, and sinking on a chair, gave free vent to her feelings in a burst of tears : "Oh, that I should have lived to see such a day as this ! to be sure I thought that I should have staid with my dear mistress, till that sweet baby should close these poor eyes for a better world ; but now

I must go, a lonely creature, without—but God forgive me, sinful woman that I am, and make me more thankful for all His blessings, for I have a home, thanks to my poor master, when thousands are turned out of happy places without one!” So saying, she submissively arose, and collecting the keys, which for ten years had been in her charge, went to deliver them to the man waiting to receive them for their new owner, and taking Tiny in her arms, she gave a last look to all around her, bent her steps towards St. Llenard’s to take possession of her humble dwelling, and, as she closed the last great gate, declared that she would never put her foot within the walls of Berwyns again: “no, not she, nor even *look* at it, if she could but stop up the only window of her cot that looked towards the park.”

Mrs. Irwyn, the moment she was seated in the carriage, threw herself back, and hiding her face with both her hands, looked back no more on that sweet home where she had passed the happiest moments of her life. Ellen, too much accustomed to see her mother melancholy, scarcely heeded the tears which fell from her eyes; silenced by them only for a few moments, she kissed her hand; then going to the opposite window, began talking of all that she was to see, till, on turning

from the Priory, she exclaimed, "Oh! mamma, there's Mr. Seymour and dear Fanny. I wish I could speak to them; they are kissing their hands from the study window. Oh! now I can't see them any more; good-bye, Fanny, good-bye; I shall soon write to you. Oh! mamma, how much I shall have to tell her all about towns, and cities, and streets! Oh, how I wish Fanny could go with me!" But St. Llenard's was now lost to them; and having passed the glen of Calwan, the last of the village, and no longer in sight of Llanvair, Berwyns, or St. Llenard's Priory, Mrs. Irwyn raised her head from her hands, and earnestly ejaculating, "Thank Heaven!" she seemed as if released from some dreadful oppression, and felt thankful in having so soon passed over the land with which all that had been dear to her was so immediately associated; but she soon resumed her self-possession, and had any who knew the tenor of her mind then seen her, they would scarcely have observed that she had been particularly agitated, or was more depressed than usual. Ellen, too, soon resumed all her thoughtless gaiety of spirits, and jumping upon Russell's knee, in the course of a few hours talked herself fast asleep.

But while our travellers pursue a three days'

journey to Hampshire, we may take a short sketch of Mrs. Irwyn's history. She was collaterally the descendant of a once noble Hugonot family, who were among the many sufferers from the persecutions of papal tyranny; and at a later period her father, M. de Boville, was himself compelled to seek refuge as an emigrant in England, for the sake of a dearly-loved wife, who did not long survive the effects of revolutionary terror, leaving an only child to soothe the exile of the desolate widower. Subsequently, feeling his own health to be declining, he removed to Wales, where a friend of his earlier life was residing, assured that in Lady Warton his little girl would find a benefactress, in every respect capable of supplying to her a mother's guardian care, while leading her young mind to those principles which had supported herself through much tribulation and trial. Nor did he too highly estimate the character on which he thus so confidently reposed. Lady Warton welcomed the stranger to her neighbourhood with all the generous hospitality of a warm and benevolent heart, and at his death she received the orphan as one of her own children, and ever acted towards her as parent and friend. Thus Adeline, at the age of fourteen, became an inmate of Llanvair Hall, where, happy in the bosom of an

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amiable family, she soon became reconciled to her bereavement.

Lady Warton was one of those who acted towards her fellow-creatures from the principle of universal charity. Her children looked up to her as one whom they feared only in giving offence, and loved to please as securing to themselves that tenderness and approbation which formed their greatest delight. She was firmly attached to the Church of England, but her hand was alike extended to bestow relief on all who needed it ; for it was enough that the power was hers to bestow it, that she gratefully accepted the privilege of so doing in the name of Him, from whom she knew that she should receive tenfold the blessings she gave to others for His sake. Early left an orphan by the premature death of her parents, she married Sir James Warton when she had scarcely attained her eighteenth year, and found, alas ! that a union founded only upon principles of mere worldly motive, was one ill calculated to realise the dreams of domestic happiness ; and thus early sacrificed to the temper of an unprincipled husband, her own naturally high and self-willed character yielded to the trials of disappointed affection, until, driven by her desolateness to seek a higher ground of happiness, Christianity sup-

plied that peace which can be derived from no other than its own pure source. Thus disciplined to resignation and forbearance, she possessed that fortitude in her own, and consideration for the sorrows of others, which the experience of affliction, perhaps, can best effect. She had indeed early imbibed religious principles from her mother ; and often when yielding to the impulse of grief, the remembrance of her affectionate counsels would cross her mind.

On the decease of that excellent parent, she was so young that she could but faintly recal any traces either of her features or person ; but she well remembered a scene, from which she dated her first impression of piety : it occurred about a year previous to her mother's death, who, upon the loss of an only boy, remained for some days absorbed in grief. It was at this time that Lady Warton, then about six years old, went one morning into her mother's room, and saw her deeply engaged in studying the Bible, and after reading it for some time she kissed her child, bidding her kneel down to praise God with her for the mercies still spared to them ; after which she appeared more resigned and cheerful for the remainder of the day. The next morning Fanny again found her mother occupied with the same book ; traces of tears were

still upon her cheek, but, silenced by the scene, she forbore speaking until her mother had finished reading, when, running up to her, she exclaimed, "Now, dear mamma, you will not cry any more to-day." Struck by the remark, her mother caught her in her arms, and Lady Warton never forgot the bright countenance with which she replied, "No, my child, and when you have learnt the value of those blessed scriptures you will be happy also; for they will lead you to Him who has borne our sorrows, and will wipe all tears from our eyes." She could not then comprehend the meaning of her mother's words, but the impression which they left upon her mind was never lost: so much may the influence of a parent's example affect the whole life and welfare of her child!

On the death of her husband, Lady Warton sold her house in Gloucester-place, and left London, determined to pass the remainder of her life on her estate in Wales, where she retired with her children, resolved to shield these little treasures from the fascinations of a world, which, in her youth, had held out such false attractions, and fatally allured her to so much misery. Grateful for the many blessings now granted her, she never forgot to whose mercy she was indebted for their

possession ; and while enjoying them, failed not to evince her sense of the divine goodness, by the performance of those duties most acceptable to her heavenly Father. Thus she became, at once, patroness and benefactress to all who needed her assistance or care ; and while bestowing happiness on all around her, she enjoyed within herself that tranquil tenor of mind, which can only dwell with one so tempered ; but still hers was more peace than happiness, for time had only softened, not removed, the remembrance of her early trials ; so that she might be said to rejoice rather in submission to the will of God, than in a life over which prosperity now seemed to scatter its brightest flowers : but for happiness—she awaited patiently till she might receive it in those realms of future glory, where, in full confidence of the promises of her Redeemer, her heart now rested, convinced that there only the Christian could find “ a rest from labour.” Yet at all times she was so serenely cheerful, that those who knew not the “ intimacy of her mind,” declared that “ Lady Warton must be the happiest woman, and Llanvair Hall the happiest place, in the world.”

She had two daughters, Julia and Althea, who being of nearly the same age as Adeline, soon became like sisters to her ; but Julia more especially,

who was a sweet and gentle girl, so completely won an influence over her mind, that in all things she submitted rather to the judgment of her friend, than to her own ; more perhaps from indolence of disposition than from anything like deep affection, for, left to herself, she was cold and selfish, and was scarcely known to express a feeling of gratitude, even while so constantly receiving benefits, calculated to excite it powerfully in hearts differently constituted. Adeline, however, married when scarcely nineteen, and Mr. Irwyn, fascinated by her beauty, though not wholly blind to her faults, formed the romantic scheme, always easy, but often perilous to a lover, of making her all he wished, and establishing in her character that strength of principle which he felt so essential to his happiness and to the future mother of a family.

About the same time, Julia married Mr. Seymour, the clergyman of Llanvair ; a young man in every respect calculated to make her happy ; but her health, not being constitutionally strong, soon declined, and eight months after the birth of a little girl, she fell a sacrifice to consumption. Poor Mr. Seymour, in following her to the grave, felt that he had lost his dearest earthly treasure ; but while he deeply deplored the tender tie so

early dissolved, he kissed the rod, and blessed the chastening hand, which, in transplanting his lovely flower, thus early matured, to a heavenly soil, had but shortened her pilgrimage, and wrenched from his heart, for purposes of infinite love, the idol which he perhaps had too fondly worshipped : that his soul might be more closely united to his God.

The deathbed of Julia was that of a sincere Christian, over whom hung those bright hopes which faith had realised to her departing spirit. The conviction of her happiness now reconciled Mr. Seymour, in an earthly sense, to his severe bereavement ; submission to the will of God did the rest, so that he returned from the grave depressed, but not subdued ; resigned, but not enfeebled : his duties remained the same, and with the same pious zeal he steadily pursued them.

Lady Warton, too, deeply mourned the loss of her departed child, but other claims soon roused the natural energy of her mind. Althea, who had married an officer, was going to India, and entreated her mother to join her at Lymington to assist in the arrangements of her domestic affairs, being compelled to leave her children in England ; a summons which Lady Warton at once obeyed, determined to take upon herself the charge of

those precious children, should the offer meet the approbation of their parents.

Mr. Irwyn lived only eight years after his marriage, leaving his widow overwhelmed with grief, and two children to feel the untimely loss of a parent, whose life (humanly speaking) seemed so essentially necessary to their future welfare. Berwyns now wore a melancholy aspect; Mrs. Irwyn, unsupported by religion, yielded wholly to indolence and depression, and scarcely feeling interested even in the education of her children, she gladly accepted Dr. Herbert's offer of receiving his little godson, and left the care of Ellen chiefly to Johnson, who, fortunately, was not only a faithful servant, but a most judicious and excellent guide.

Misfortune now seemed to follow this unhappy family. The bank, in which Mrs. Irwyn had placed a considerable part of her property, failed, and nothing was left from the wreck to insure a provision for herself and children. The tidings of its failure were as sudden as unexpected; but she received them, if not with indifference, almost with apathy: she was "a wretched widow, and could never see another happy hour; she therefore now cared little what became of her." Such was her language, and certain poverty must have been her

fate, had not her friends interested themselves in her behalf, and for the sake of her children taken the arrangement of her affairs into their own hands. They advised her to dispose of Berwyns immediately, being now wholly incompetent to meet its expenses, by which, together with a small income left by her father, an independence was secured; though the most frugal economy would still be necessary in her future establishment. Dr. Herbert, immediately on receiving the sad intelligence of these unlooked-for changes, procured for his young charge the promise of a commission in the East India service, as being a profession least likely to incur expense; and placed him in a military school near Portsmouth, where he was to remain until he was of an age to accept his cadetship. In consequence of this, Dr. Herbert urged Mrs. Irwyn to settle in Hampshire, offering to seek a residence in his own neighbourhood, suitable to her circumstances, where she might also have the advantage of being near her son. Lady Warton seconded the proposal; for though disheartened by the conduct of her young friend, yet ever alive to the sorrows of others, she was anxious to draw her away from the scene of so many recent trials; and Mrs. Irwyn herself, pleased with the arrangement, lost no time in breaking up her establishment in

Wales, and soon became, in some degree, reconciled to the changes which awaited her. Poor Johnson anxiously desired to accompany her mistress, willing to share, without a regret, every threatened privation; but to this Mrs. Irwyn would not consent, her finances being now unequal to support the expenses of such a servant, without reducing her wages; she therefore insisted on leaving her, and advised her settling in her own little cottage, where Mrs. Irwyn promised that the children should one day visit her.

Such was the early life of Mrs. Irwyn; and having already given an account of her departure from Berwyns, we need not reiterate the detail, but may at once follow her history, and meet our little heroine on her arrival in Hampshire.

CHAPTER II.

THE evening on which our travellers reached Lymington, was one calculated to throw a brightness on every prospect ; it was in the latter part of September, when the surrounding woods, full of rich luxuriance, mellowed by the first tints of autumn, gave to nature its finest display of magnificence. The sun, just falling from the horizon, threw its last red beams upon the slated roof of the little cottage, where Dr. Herbert stood to receive and welcome its new tenants. Not a breeze was heard to disturb the evening song of the forest warblers, and all around was so serene, so tranquil, that it was calculated to impress the mind with a sense of its own peacefulness.

The cottage was named Hermitage, being built upon a spot where had once been discovered, buried under some moss, a Saxon staff, scallop

shell, and a rude oaken coffin,—enough to celebrate it as the last remains of a Druid's temple; particularly as near it was a sort of cave or hermitage, formed by the huge trunks of worn-out oak, bearing the appearance, or at least justifying a probability, of its having been the retreat of some of our wild forefathers, though more likely, nature in its decay had alone formed this phenomenon, which nevertheless became the subject of many a traditional tale, said to be “founded on fact” from some “ancient Anglo-Saxon legend.” It was a neat and prettily arranged cottage *ornée*, with white cement walls, and gothic windows, standing back from the public road, and concealed from the “rude gaze of passers-by,” by thick plantations of various shrubs. Mrs. Irwyn, as she alighted from the carriage, looked on the lovely scene which surrounded her, and, pleased by its first impression, she seemed to receive some compensation for the change which she had silently dreaded to encounter; and giving her hand to Dr. Herbert, smiled through her tears, in silent acknowledgment of the satisfaction which the appearance of her little abode afforded her. The sight of him, indeed, awakened the memory of happy days, which he had in part witnessed and shared—days now closed for ever in the grave of

her lamented and excellent husband : but the feeling was transient, for almost immediately recovering herself, she thanked Dr. Herbert for his kindness in having secured to her so pretty a retreat. "And I hope, my dear madam," replied the doctor, "it will be one of comfort to you, and that you will here pass many happy years amongst us." Mrs. Irwyn sighed as she thought of Berwyns, and, looking up reproachfully, said within herself, "Happy years, indeed ! unfeeling thought ! but there is no one who can understand such accumulated grief as mine." Ellen fortunately broke the silence which might otherwise long have followed, as running in, half abashed, she went up to Dr. Herbert, to ask for her "sweet brother." He took her on his knee, and replied, "Your sweet brother is quite well, and will join you on Saturday for a few weeks ; but pray how old is his sweet sister ?" added he, gaily.

"I am just ten," replied Ellen, "and Herbert is fourteen."

"Well, I hope you will come to the Rectory to-morrow, and see my little Caroline, who is just ten also, and will, I think, make a fine playfellow for you : at least she is a great romp." The doctor, then saying that Mrs. Herbert would call the next morning, took his leave, and left his

friends to that rest, really needed after so many fatigues.

The next morning Ellen arose as soon as her eyes were open, and running down stairs, went to see the garden in which she was to have so much pleasure; when called to breakfast, she ran in, full of spirits, and exclaimed, "O mamma! you can't think what a sweet place this is; I like it a great deal better than Berwyns, only I wish that Fanny Seymour and dear Johnson were here, and my little Tiny, and then I should be quite, quite happy. I must write to Fanny soon, and tell her what a pretty cottage this is; though I don't think it is larger than the Priory; is it, mamma? I liked Berwyns very much, but it was so very large, that it made my legs ache to run up and down so many stairs, and through such a great hall, only to go from the breakfast room to the nursery; but now, I can be here, there, and everywhere in a moment; and from down stairs to my room, why, it is nothing more than a hop, skip, and a jump: and then you said you would give me a little garden quite to myself. Oh! I know I shall be so happy!"

"Indeed, my dear Ellen," said Mrs. Irwyu, "I will give you anything to keep you quiet, for your constant chattering really quite distracts me; so

do come and choose a garden ; then, after breakfast, pray dig, or do anything you like, as long as you keep out of the way and don't tease me : and then by-and-bye Russell shall take you to Dr. Herbert's, where I have promised you shall dine with Caroline and Frederic."

" Oh ! but I don't think I shall like to go there without you, mamma, so I shall stay at home and dig my garden."

" Nonsense, Ellen, do as I bid you, and don't be tiresome."

" Well, but I may go and dig first, for I shall have plenty of time, as, now that Johnson is not with me, I shall never have any lessons to learn."

" I beg your pardon, Miss Ellen," replied her mother, " for as soon as your brother has left us, I shall begin teaching you myself."

Ellen sighed at this unexpected intelligence, but only said, " I am sure, mamma, teaching *me* will tease you ; for Johnson said I was very tiresome sometimes, when I did not choose to be a good girl." So saying, she ran off, followed by her mother, to the spot chosen as her favourite, and having received her allotted portion of ground, she was left to sweep, dig, or weed, as best suited her fancy."

Lady Warton was still residing in Colonel

Stacy's house, in the neighbourhood of Lymington, but the distance which separated it from Mrs. Irwyn's being beyond a walk, precluded the probability of their meeting so frequently as when in Wales ; indeed, the health of Lady Warton was so much impaired by recent anxiety, together with an accident which had entirely lamed her left side, that she was now wholly incapable of undergoing much bodily fatigue, and therefore seldom went from home, where she found enough to engage her mind in the charge of Althea's children. Anxious, however, to see her once dear *protégée*, she came immediately to greet her arrival ; and though deeply disappointed in all her hopes where Adeline was concerned, she still met her with tenderness and heartfelt commiseration. She was received, though with kindness, yet without any apparent gladness of heart. Lady Warton felt herself chilled, but not offended ; the past indeed floated on her mind, and tears of many a dear remembrance trickled down her cheek ; but soon forgetting her own in the sad privations of the widowed Adeline, she gently took her hand, and reminded her of the " blessings still spared to her by that gracious God who never forsakes His children, nor leaves the widow in her distress, though

for purposes of mercy He may for a time afflict them."

Mrs. Irwyn was perfectly silent,—almost sullenly so ;—she thought herself the most unfortunate and injured of women, and deemed all those who would not think so too, cruel and unfeeling : but, when she heard Lady Warton talk of *blessings*, she thought within herself, "All are alike callous to my misfortunes, and age surely makes human nature turn heartlessly from its own miseries, since even Lady Warton has forgotten how to sympathise with the stricken deer." Lady Warton observed the workings of her mind, and was as much pained by her ungrateful indifference, as sorry for her pitiable situation. She saw that her heart, as Mr. Seymour had led her to fear, was indeed closed against that heavenly Spirit, whose presence is joy and peace, and whose voice can ever gladden the soul, tempered to receive its consolations ; but discouraged by the determined silence of Adeline, she forbore all further remonstrance ; convinced that it would be ineffectual, trusting rather that Heaven, in its own good time, would warm so cold a soil to receive and nurture the seeds of a holier temper. She entered on a general topic of conversation,

and to Mrs. Irwyn's inquiries after Colonel and Mrs. Stacy she replied, that she had heard of their safe arrival in India, and that the three children were with her—the youngest a boy, only seventeen months old. “Thus,” said she, “does Providence ever follow me with undeserved mercies ; for were I left with a less anxious charge, I fear that my heart would sometimes indulge in lamenting its bereavements, and many an ungrateful thought might then follow the retrospection, or many an anxious wish dwell on the future, to embitter my present blessings ; for,” added she, with a resigned smile, “ I may probably say that I have seen the last of *both* my children ; and though my Althea's light heart anticipates our meeting again in three years, I confess my fears that ten must elapse before her return, and I can scarcely anticipate so prolonged a life.” Mrs. Irwyn answered, that she hoped “ many more years might still be numbered for her portion, as she could not yet talk of old age.”

“ God's will be done,” replied Lady Warton, “ my own would but ill direct my wishes had I no better pilot ; but,” added she, returning to her subject, “ these little treasures which Althea has left me, prove, I assure you, a great source of amusement and solace to me ; and you know I

am not one of those who think age privileged to be idle : all here have their appointed duties, from childhood even to the grave ; here, then, we must work ; and for *rest*—we may look to heaven, and hope to find that which ‘ remaineth for the people of God.’”

Lady Warton then took her leave, and as she got into the carriage, Mrs. Irwyn could not but observe how much the few last years had changed her ; for, being lame, she was obliged to use a crutch whenever she went out, which gave her an appearance of premature infirmity ; so that, although she was not yet sixty, she bore the traces of much later years. Sorrow, too, had left its withering traces upon her cheek ; but the smiles of resignation still illumined her sweet countenance with a brightness which time could never dim.

Dr. and Mrs. Herbert were now announced, and the ladies being introduced in due form to each other, the conversation turned upon the children of the respective parties, always an inexhaustible topic. Dr. Herbert requested that Ellen might return with them, who in about half an hour made her appearance, drest ready for her visit, though looking anything but pleased by this interruption to her favourite pursuits.

Mrs. Herbert was a young and beautiful little woman, but with neither mind to enjoy anything beyond dress and admiration, nor a heart to love aught but herself and her children. She was extremely insipid, fond of company, and being rich, was, of course, visited by everybody; for if no one esteemed her, she was yet courted by many of the world, to whom her society was advantageous. She was indolent to an extreme, and thought herself quite overburthened in the care of her own dress, and of her children's complexions, who were allowed to do what they pleased, because it fatigued her to be always finding fault; so that they were permitted to run truant, so long as Miss Caroline was not in the sun without a veil to protect her pretty face, or Master Frederic without his gloves to shield his white hands. Sometimes, indeed, Dr. Herbert would remonstrate with his wife, on the folly of always allowing them to run wild, as they were now old enough to begin better pursuits; but the delicate little lady would generally silence him by replying, that really she was so weak and nervous, that she was sure the anxiety of teaching them would throw her into a decline, and that the children were yet "*very* young." "Well, my love," was usually the reply, "then perhaps we had better think of getting a gover-

ness ;" but day after day and month after month passed, yet no governess was thought of, and the young ones were still left to run wild, while the parents were sufficiently satisfied with the intention of doing better.

Dr. Herbert was a generous, well-informed, and in many respects a superior man ; but in his clerical character, the very reverse of Mr. Seymour. His only sister had, when very young, married the Earl of Selliston, who, holding the richly-endowed living of Durnford in his gift, persuaded his brother-in-law to resign the military profession, for which he was previously intended, and prepare himself for the Church. His own mind at first—and to his credit be it said—revolted against a proposal which he was manifestly unfitted to accept ; but being of a pliable disposition, and urged by his father to adopt the advice of his worldly relative, he at length yielded his own more honourable scruples to the importunity of others, and entered college, with abilities, indeed, to pass through the necessary course of study with some credit to his intellectual understanding, but without one serious apprehension of the vast and solemn responsibility attached to the duties of his ordination vows ; or of the fearful guilt which will surely be laid to the charge of him who

embraces the ministerial office, apart from the unction of God's Holy Spirit. No ; having silenced the latent scruples of a startled conscience, by a blind compliance to what he considered a dutiful obedience to parental authority, he threw off the shame of selfish motives, with all their dire consequences, to those whose influence had decided him. And thus the scholar was ordained ; and Dr. Herbert eventually became the rich incumbent of Durnford, a wealthy and fashionable neighbourhood in Hampshire ; and having a good voice, and great eloquence of language, he was admired in the pulpit as a fine preacher, and welcomed in the world as one not opposed to its vanities. But to the poor and unlearned of his congregation he was, alas ! but as a " blind leader ;" and they who listened, to learn wisdom from his lips, in the teaching of those deep things of God, " which make for our everlasting peace,"—heard nothing but the " loveliness of the song," whose uninspired melody passed away with the wind, and left no Hallelujah of " glory to the Lamb,"—no unction of that Spirit, which alone can " turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." Apart from our beautiful liturgy, the service was but one of outward solemnities. The temple was richly adorned—the music

of its choir more select than suitable ; more addressed to the ear of man than to the throne of God ! And its altar was meet for the oblations of gold and silver, and costly trappings ; but where was the *only* sacrifice which man *can* offer to the “ Lord of Hosts ! ”—where the worship, which alone can blend with the angelic songs of heaven ? “ Bring no more vain oblations,” saith the Lord, “ incense is an abomination to me.” “ The gold is mine, and the silver is mine ; ”—“ I will purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.”—But, “ give me thine *heart*,”—“ the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a *contrite heart* ; ” and “ they that worship me, must worship me in *spirit and in truth*,” not “ *with the works of their own hands, that which their fingers have made.*”

Such is the inspired language of holy scripture ;—such is “ *evangelical* ” truth ; but it was the very boast of Dr. Herbert, that he was *not* an “ evangelical preacher.” So he preached of heavenly things, as of “ dark sayings, hard to be understood ; ” and of righteousness and the “ life to come ” as meritoriously our own, through the ordinance of baptism, the fulfilment of moral laws, and the consciousness of a well spent life ; that is, a life free from any breach of social virtues,

or direct forgetfulness of God in His providences. And those who heard him, believed the welcome creed of God's *mercy*, apart from God's *holiness*, and left the service, if profited at all,—profited only through the prayers, which could not be thus perverted by man's invention, or distorted by man's fallacious views!

But to return to the incidents of our story. Ellen, on her arrival at the Rectory, was soon introduced to the little lady, who was to be her future play-fellow and friend. She came running into the drawing-room with her frock torn and covered with mud; and without waiting for the ceremony of an introduction, she took Ellen roughly by the arm, and exclaimed, impatiently, "Oh! do come with me and see Frederic's fish: make haste, for if papa sees me, he will make a fine fuss." Unfortunately, however, for the young lady, her mother, who had been looking for her, came in just at the conclusion of this speech, and said, "Naughty girl! where have you been to make yourself in such a condition? did I not desire you to be dressed ready to receive Miss Irwyn!—yet there you are, just like a little beggar, without your bonnet too, although you know how much it vexes me to see you spoil your complexion in this way; but," added she, ringing

the bell violently, "Davis shall have a good scolding for this."

"Why, mamma," replied Caroline, "I did dress; only Frederic called me to see his fish, and we have had such fun in dragging the pond."

Davis came in, and having patiently received her "good scolding," only replied that she had dressed Miss Herbert twice since breakfast, and had told her twenty times not to go into the garden; but it was useless to speak, for she would always have her own way.

Ellen, who had expected that some further displeasure must ensue, was surprised on finding Caroline's disobedience remained unpunished; silently, however, obeying the summons to follow her up stairs, she was glad to leave such an altercation. She had never been in any other parsonage than that of St. Leonard's; but having always attached an idea of extreme neatness to a clergyman's residence, was surprised to find herself in one so magnificent. She had heard Mr. Seymour tell Fanny, when she was once wishing to have some mirrors like those in the drawing-room at Berwyns, that such ornaments were not fit for a country parson's house; yet in this, every room glittered with the brilliancy of its chandeliers.

The nursery was equally a new scene to her : toys of every description lay scattered on the floor ; but a large baby-house was the one which immediately attracted her attention, and running forward, she exclaimed, "O! Caroline, may I look at this beautiful house?"

"Beautiful!" exclaimed she, "I am sure it is a nasty old thing, I am quite tired of it ; but as soon as I am drest, I will take you into the garden, and we can just run to see Frederic's fish ; only don't tell mamma."

"O, then," said Ellen, "we had better stay in-doors and play here, for Mrs. Herbert would be angry again if we went out without her leave, and I don't like to see you scolded."

"I don't care what mamma says, she is always so cross, so indeed I shall go just where and when I please ; besides, we can go down the back stairs and through the stable-yard, and then she need know nothing about it."

"But then that would be very sly," replied Ellen, who had never yet known what it was to have a thought of her little heart concealed, "and God, who knows everything, would be the more angry with us."

Caroline looked up perfectly astonished, and laughing heartily, exclaimed, "Why, what a little

methodist you must be, Ellen ! however, do as you like, to the pond I shall go as soon as I am ready."

Davis now entered the room with another dress for her young lady, but Missy, already half vexed with Ellen, vented her rage in a violent stamp of the foot, declaring she would not put on that "*hideous frock*," but would have the one trimmed with lace. After some further altercation, Davis saw that all remonstrance was useless, and would only create a fit of crying without gaining any control over the child ; she, therefore, went for the favourite frock of the day, and after ten thousand difficulties, Miss Caroline was at last ready to go down stairs.

Pacified, but half ashamed of her own conduct, and anxious to obtain an ascendancy over Ellen, who she saw was not to be frightened into compliance, Caroline went up to her with a conciliating smile, and throwing her arm round her neck, said, " Don't look so grave, dearest Ellen ; let us be friends, for I am sure that I shall love you very much ; just come down and see Frederic, and then I will show you the rose-tree Herbert gave me when he was staying here."

Endearment to Ellen was always irresistible ; and when she looked on the beautiful face of her

play-fellow, which seemed so forcibly to ask her affection, her own unsuspecting heart opened to the appeal, and she replied, "I will do anything you like, Caroline; but indeed I think we had better not go out, or at least, if you really wish it, do let me ask Mrs. Herbert's leave, and I will tell her it is I who wish to go," half blushing at this first prevarication from the truth.

"Nonsense, Ellen! mamma is dressing, and would not now like to be disturbed; besides, it cannot signify, for I know that she would let us go," artfully replied Caroline, while, dragging her unwilling companion out of the room, she led her down the back stairs, and in a few moments they reached the pond.

Dr. Herbert, the only person in the world whom Caroline feared, on meeting her at dinner looked as if seriously offended, and fixing his eyes steadily on the countenance of his daughter, asked her how she dared go again to the pond, when her mother had so positively prohibited her doing so. This was followed by artful excuses on one side, and severe reprehension on the other; till the subject was at length closed by Dr. Herbert simply adding, that he was now resolved Frederic should go to Eton, and that he would procure a governess

for Caroline, since she was no longer fit to be trusted by herself.

Thus passed the first day of Ellen's introduction at the Rectory : when she left it, Caroline gave her a work-box, as an earnest of her wish for further intimacy, and repeated the hope that they might soon be "great friends." All this did much in gaining Ellen's heart, which was susceptible to anything like kindness ; but she returned home only half pleased with her day, and quite undecided whether she could love Caroline. To Mrs. Irwyn's inquiries how she had enjoyed her visit, she replied that she liked home best.

" But don't you like Caroline ? "

" Yes, mamma, I like Caroline very much ; at least she was very kind to me ; but I believe she is spoilt, and tells so many stories, that I can't love her so well as Fanny Seymour."

" Because you know more of Fanny, but I dare say that you will soon like Caroline just as well."

Ellen shook her head, but not willing to say anything more against Caroline, she changed the subject, and said, " How glad I shall be, mamma, when dear Herbert comes home, for I love him better than any one else ; but as to Frederic Herbert !—I quite *hate* him."

“ Why,” said her mother, “ what has poor Frederic done to offend you so grievously ?”

“ Done, mamma !—he is the most cruel boy I ever saw ; he caught a water-rat, and O ! I cannot tell you how he tormented it—and then said that Herbert was a coward, because he never would join him in any of his cruelties ; but I shall always hate him, and I am sure brother must hate him too.”

“ You should never hate any one, Ellen ; though it is indeed very wicked to be cruel : but how did you like the house ? is it not very beautiful ?”

“ O ! yes, it is so full of pretty things, that my eyes quite ached with looking at them all : but, mamma, I thought a clergyman ought never to have so fine a house—at least Mr. Seymour says so.”

“ Mr. Seymour is not rich, therefore he could not afford it ; but Dr. Herbert has a very large fortune, and consequently may live in style.”

Ellen could not quite understand this conclusion of her mother, having heard Mr. Seymour tell Fanny that a clergyman must avoid every superfluous expense, to be enabled more largely to contribute to the necessities of the infirm and poor. Ellen remembered all this, and, thought she, “ That is the reason why there are no

ragged children about Llanvair, and if Dr. Herbert would only have a house like St. Llenard's, O! how much money he would have to spare! quite enough to buy shoes and stockings for all those poor people we met to-day." She then bade her mother good night, happy in her last thought, that in one more day Herbert would be with them.

Another day quickly passed; the happy Saturday arrived. Ellen got up early to sweep and weed her garden, that Herbert might see how industrious she had been; but scarcely had she completed her morning's task, when she heard herself called: down went her broom, wheelbarrow, and spade, at the well-remembered voice, and in one moment she was with her brother. Both seemed equally delighted to be once more together; but Ellen was almost wild with joy, and running in doors, she exclaimed, half laughing, half crying, "Mamma! do come down stairs, here is our own dear Herbert come already." Breakfast was nearly over before she could recover herself; question after question rapidly followed, and vainly did her mother attempt to silence her. Mrs. Irwyn expressed herself pleased with the improved appearance of her son, and with the good report she had received of his excellent conduct; but

he had expected a warmer greeting, and his affectionate heart was damped by the disappointment of such a reception. Chilled by her calm approbation, his young heart turned towards Ellen, doubly gratified by the enthusiasm of delight which her every word expressed. This he had scarcely expected, supposing that she might have forgotten him ; it seemed to him, therefore, like a new pleasure, which perhaps from that hour strengthened the tie of fraternal affection which ever afterwards so powerfully united them.

Anxious to display the beauties of their new habitation to her brother, Ellen claimed all his attention ; and taking him to see her favourite garden, she exclaimed, “ Look, Herbert,—have I not been very industrious ? for I assure you this was a perfect wilderness, and now you see I have made it look almost as neat as my garden at Berwyns ; but you must cut my rose-trees, and show me how to mat this beautiful little pomegranate for the winter. Don’t you like this much better than Wales, brother ? ”

“ O no, Ellen,” replied Herbert, gravely, “ I shall never love any place so well as our last home.”

“ Why not ? This is quite as pretty.”

“ It may be as pretty, but dear Johnson is not

here, and Fanny Seymour cannot come and play with us as she used to do ; and everything seems so different, that I am sure I shall feel like a fish out of water ; and what signifies the place, Ellen, without the people !”

“ To be sure, the people are very different, but then you know it is a different country, and, as Mr. Seymour used to say, ‘ when in Rome, we must expect to meet Romans,’—so we must expect to meet gay people in a gay place, and suit our fancies accordingly.”

“ Yes, but that is no argument, dear Ellen, to prove that we must love Rome best, or gay people either ; nor shall I ever like this so well as Llanvair.”

“ I declare, brother, you ought to be crowned Prince of Wales—you are so true to your country : but what makes you look so grave ?”

“ Why, Ellen, I was thinking of poor papa, who was so fond of Berwyns, and of that happy time when he used to take me out shooting with him, though I was then but a little boy ;—and how we used to scramble up the mountains together till my little legs quite ached, and then he would tell me not to mind it, as I must learn to be a brave mountaineer, and to know every hill about Llanvair. Don’t you remember, Ellen, how

fond he was of everything belonging to home? and had he lived, we should not now be living so far from all that was dear to him; but when I return from India, I will buy Berwyns again, cost what it will," said the affectionate boy, tears filling his eyes.

Ellen's susceptible little heart caught the sadness of her brother's countenance, though she could not enter into such retrospections; but after a few minutes' silence she exclaimed, "Herbert, how Johnson would love to hear you speak of papa!—I have never thought of him so much as I ought, but I will think of him more, and not love this place better than Berwyns."

"I am glad that you do like the change, dear Ellen," replied Herbert, "since you are bound to live here; but I should be sorry to hear you say that you had forgotten Wales; and surely you must miss our kind Johnson, and Mr. Seymour, and sweet little Fanny, for there are none here half so good as they are."

"No," said Ellen, with an arch expression; "truly may you say that, and as truly add, that there are none *there*, half so hateful as Frederic Herbert: I wonder, brother, you can love him!"

"I never said that I did, Ellen, for I think him a very wicked boy; but he is so spoilt by

his mother, that we must pity, more than hate him."

"Pity him!—I don't see why, for he is quite old enough to be a great deal better than he is: but do you like Dr. Herbert as well as Mr. Seymour?"

"What a question!—why, they are as different as the land in which they live. I like Dr. Herbert, because he has been so very kind to me, that I should be ungrateful to do otherwise, though I was heartily glad when I went to school; however, he is a very good man in his way, so I will say no more about him—but let us go in, for I have not seen half the house." So saying, both returned to their mother, and soon forgot all those sad thoughts which had cast so unusual a gravity on Ellen's countenance.

Such were the characteristics of these young minds. Framed alike in some respects, both might be said to possess the foundation on which a skilful architect might have raised a temple of the purest excellence. Herbert possessed much of his father's brave and generous spirit, which, with no ordinary measure of good sense, counteracted the dangers of a naturally romantic disposition: he was tenderly alive to kindness, but could too well discriminate between right and

wrong ever to love where he could not esteem. Constitutionally susceptible, his affection was easily excited, but was as easily chilled. Where he loved he expected too much perfection, and was, therefore, frequently exposed to disappointment. He had not the quick abilities of his sister; he possessed more sound judgment and good sense than talents; but he had a peculiarly contemplative mind, which delighted itself in all the ideal visions of a lively imagination, and this led him to bask, with a romantic susceptibility, on hopes too bright to be realised; or to dwell, with a fond melancholy, on retrospections which he believed had been too happy ever to be known again. He had always wished for the church as his future profession; but when told that he was destined for the army, in consequence of his mother's inability to meet the expenses of a college education, he submitted patiently, though inwardly he bitterly lamented the disappointment. Thus he entered his military career, checked in his earliest wishes; but he was too brave to fear the dangers of a soldier's life, or to dislike its discipline, so that at Portsmouth he was equally beloved by masters and schoolfellows, and whenever judgment or justice was required to appease a dispute, or to

decide an argument between his young companions, Herbert Irwyn was always consulted.

Had little Ellen, too, from this period fallen under the guidance of a judicious hand, the prophecy—that she would become “an angel upon earth,” which Johnson’s partial heart had often framed in her behalf, might, perhaps, have been almost fulfilled. Nature had modelled her mind with many a fine outline; she could do anything she chose to attempt, but was so extremely idle and volatile, that she had neither perseverance nor inclination to study anything from choice: yet, with a gentle hand, she was tractable, affectionate, and obedient; affection could lead her with a word, but violence could never drive her to anything; reason could bend her to immediate compliance, but severity was sure to excite the most determined obstinacy. She saw her mother’s indolence, and too often availed herself of the liberty it allowed her, so that having no one who could judiciously guide her, she soon became self-willed and disobedient; yet there was always so much sweetness of temper blending even with her perverseness, that it was scarcely possible to be long angry with her, although no child was really more provoking.

A few days after Herbert's arrival, Mrs. Irwyn and her children were spending the day at the Rectory, and tea was scarcely over, when she was sent for in consequence of the arrival of two gentlemen, who, Russell told her, were officers, but the name she could not recollect. Mrs. Irwyn hastened home, and, on seeing the strangers, felt somewhat alarmed, as, not recognising either of them, she was at a loss to conjecture their errand. The elder took her hand respectfully, and said, "Adeline, no wonder that time should have removed all traces of our former selves, but have you quite forgotten the name of your cousin Albert de Raucy?" Mrs. Irwyn turned pale, as she too well remembered it as being associated with her days of childhood. "I could not indeed," said she, "have known you personally; but believe me, if aught on earth could afford me another moment of happiness, it would be a visit from so dear and early a friend."

"I was certain," replied the Baron, "that I should meet from you such a reception, and let me now introduce you to another generation of our race, Louis, my only remaining child."

Being thus summoned, Louis came forward and gracefully received the introduction, while Mrs. Irwyn thought that she had rarely seen a youth

so immediately prepossessing ; she bade her guests would make themselves at home, and choose what refreshments would be most acceptable.

“ We can scarcely call ourselves travellers,” replied the Baron, “ as we are only come from Portsmouth ; therefore, if you please, we will wait your supper hour.” He then sat down by her side, and in answer to her inquiries as to what brought him to England, he replied, “ Were I, my dear Adeline, to enter into all the particulars of my history since our last meeting, your patience would be tried to its utmost ; I will therefore briefly give you its outline.” He then simply related that he had settled with his father, immediately on leaving Paris, at Vevay, where, in right of his mother, they held some small possessions ; and that, during his residence there, he had married a Swiss girl, and joined the Hanoverian allies, then commanded by her father, General de la Pierre, and that he was himself now one of their generals : that within a few years he had lost his father and mother, and was left a widower with only one son ; and concluded by adding, that as Louis had chosen a military career, and was desirous of seeing England, he had succeeded in getting him a commission in the British army, and that to see him comfortably settled at Portsmouth,

where his regiment was then stationed, was the purport of his errand to this country. He then made many inquiries respecting Mrs. Irwyn and her family; and when he had heard the sad events which had so early clouded her life, they separated for the night, mutually interested in the remembrances of former days.

General de Rancy was of a proud and imperious disposition, but there was an elegance about him that pleased, and a kindness of heart which, when once known, covered much the asperity of his manners. His children, servants, and soldiers, had alike been taught to feel the utmost power of discipline; he exacted from them all the most implicit obedience, and where he was disobeyed, he was both tyrannical and unforgiving; but to such as valued his approbation, served him faithfully, and could patiently submit to his austere control, he was not only liberal, but attached and indulgent.

Louis, who was scarcely eighteen, was the idol of his father's heart, although no one who saw them together could accuse him of possessing too much of parental tenderness; yet where his advancement was concerned, General de Rancy would have thought no sacrifice too great to ensure it; neither had he spared any expense in his educa-

tion ; he was reared under the best tutors and the severest discipline.

Not more opposite is light to darkness, than was Louis to his father. He was mild, affectionate, and enthusiastic ; and although the baron had carefully endeavoured to subdue the excess of such feelings, they were still cherished ; but, awed by his father, he dared not betray their existence. This restraint threw over him a reserve which was often mistaken for pride, and, compelling him to conceal the warmest feelings of his heart, it often led him to seek that solitude in which he might enjoy communion with himself, and which, therefore, only fed the lamp his father so constantly endeavoured to extinguish. He felt grateful for the liberal education which he had received, but he was under too severe a control to love his father as fondly as he might otherwise have done, and would sometimes dwell on the remembrance of his mother, and think that, had she lived, he might have known a more tender parent.

According to an appointment made between them, Herbert joined his cousin early the ensuing morning, to make an excursion along the sea-side ; and it was not surprising that his young heart soon opened to the attractions of his companion, so that he returned from the ramble quite fasci-

nated, while Louis was scarcely less pleased with the frank and artless manners of his young English cousin. Herbert was delighted at the thoughts of their being often together at Portsmouth, and during the walk he could talk of little else than the pleasure which they were mutually to enjoy, feeling sure that he had at last found a friend in whom he might confide, and whose mind, if far more cultivated, yet accorded so much with his own. Breakfast over, he proposed an excursion to Beaulieu Abbey; but the weather becoming too chilly for the water, they confined themselves to a ramble as far as Boldre, to see its church, which, as a specimen of early architecture, is curious and interesting. On their return, he expatiated on the beauty of Hampshire, and told Louis that he would find much in it to please him, if his time in that neighbourhood would admit of his seeing all its lions; "although," added he, "I ought not perhaps to praise the scenery of England to a Swiss, for we have here neither Alps nor Juras to raise our imaginations to the sublime!"

"Oh! Herbert," exclaimed Louis enthusiastically, as his native mountains were thus recalled to his remembrance, "how you would *enjoy* Switzerland! Here the spirit seems bound down to earth by the weight of your low atmosphere; but

there!—the very air is food for mind, body, and soul! Oh! how you would delight in the beautiful magnificence of nature's proudest empire! Go to Mont Blanc, and you will find it there!"

"Gently, my dear cousin," replied Herbert, "and take care that you do not mistake that little white cloud for Mont Blanc, and this terra firma for ethereal air: otherwise, I fear that you will wing a flight of fancy, and only learn the sober reality of the case by as rapid a descent into that horse-pond."

"Well, Herbert, if you wish me to talk like a rational being, say nothing to me of Switzerland; its very name will act on my mind as the '*Ranz des Vaches*' has done on my countrymen before me, and make me turn deserter!—But is not this the Hermitage? we have made a short walk of our return, and I think we ought to prepare for dinner, otherwise our muster will be called, and two found wanting."

The conversation, during the remainder of the afternoon, turned generally on Lady Warton, and the events of her trying life, till Herbert called Ellen, and told her to tune her harp for performance.

"Then you will be harper, brother," said she; "for I am not in the humour for playing now;

and besides, cousin Louis is going to teach me to play chess."

"I thought, Ellen, replied Herbert, "that you could never refuse me anything; yet to-day, not one of three requests has been complied with; so much for your promised consistency."

"*Three* requests!—then I am sure that I did not hear two out of the number."

"Come to me, and I will repeat them in your ear then," replied Herbert, beckoning her; and on receiving the communication Ellen blushed, but only said, half laughing, "How could I, brother, when mamma told me to go out with her? To be sure I might have gone to you before breakfast, but I was not in the humour for reading then."

"Remember, Ellen," replied her brother, "what Mr. Seymour used to tell us—that where duty was concerned, we ought not to consult our own fancies."

"Well, then, dear Herbert," said Ellen, "I'll be more dutiful to-morrow morning; so don't preach any more, and then I will play or do anything you like;" so saying, she went, though rather unwillingly, to her harp, and looking very grave, she complained that the weather had put it so much out of tune, that she was sure it would take the whole evening to set it right; and besides,

she did not know what to play. Herbert would not therefore further press the subject ; but Louis, anxious to hear her performance, urged her to play, and promised to teach her some little Swiss airs, if she would but oblige him by one little song.

“ But how will you teach me,” said Ellen, “ for you cannot play yourself, and I do not know any notes ?”

“ Then how did you learn to play all your Welsh songs ?” asked Louis.

“ Old Llewin taught them to me when I was in Wales,” replied Ellen, “ but I can only play them from ear.”

“ Then I believe,” said Louis, “ I must delay teaching you till I come here again, and then I will bring my flute, and you can learn of me, as of old Llewin, by hearing the airs played to you.”

“ Oh ! will you !” exclaimed Ellen, with a delighted smile ; “ how I wish that you had it here now ; I am so fond of the flute ; and then I could learn your tunes, and we could play them together : oh ! when will you come again, dear Louis ? indeed you must come soon, for you have so many things to teach me.”

“ But I thought you did not like learning anything.”

“ No, I don’t like learning lessons at all, but music is a very different thing, and then I shall like you to teach me, because you are so very good-natured ; mamma says that she will give me a piano some of these days ; only I know that she very often says things that she does not mean—but do tell her that I ought to have one.”

“ Encourage me then,” said Louis, “ to make such a request, by proving to me that you deserve one.”

Ellen arose perfectly restored to her usual cheerfulness, and sang several little songs in imitation of the Welsh minstrelsy, without any apparent difficulty. Nothing interested Louis so much as early talent, but when he saw it thus displayed by one whom he had hitherto considered as a mere child, he could scarcely express his astonishment. At the conclusion of the performance, he gave her a small gold medal, which he had received for a German poem, saying, “ Had I the laurels of Ida, a more worthy tribute than this should crown you a second Euterpe.”

“ O thank you, Louis !” said the artless girl, delighted with the gift, but perfectly unconscious of the praise with which it was bestowed ; “ what a beautiful medal !—but who was Euterpe ? was she your little sister who died ?”

Louis could not help smiling at the simplicity of her reply, but seeing the playful satire expressed in the countenance of Herbert, he only shook his head, half ashamed of his own enthusiasm ; while Herbert, laughing archly, said, “ Poor Louis ! your laurels, you see, will not bear transplanting, and we cannot yet fly *quite* to the top of mount Ida.”

Ellen in the mean time had run to her mother with the medal, not waiting to hear the genealogy of Euterpe ; but the entrance of supper now put an end to the conversation, and sent Ellen to bed.

General de Rancy, thanking Mrs. Irwyn for her hospitality, told her his intention to depart, with Louis, early the next morning. Vain were her solicitations, and the entreaties of Herbert, to induce his remaining with them one more day. Mrs. Irwyn, therefore, only added, that she hoped Louis would consider the Hermitage as his headquarters, whenever he could obtain a reprieve from duty.

“ Louis would, I am sure,” replied the Baron, “ be always most happy to be an inmate of this truly hospitable home ; at the same time, I hope that he will never be tempted to follow his own inclinations at the expense of higher duties, to

which he must now devote his heart and time ; pleasure must ever give way to the post of honour. He has been brought up, Mrs. Irwyn," continued he, sternly raising his voice, " under that control which pampers not the wild imaginations of a romantic mind, but claims the severest discipline of self-denial and forbearance : he knows me well, and knows, too, that a strict adherence to his duty can alone secure my continued confidence and approbation."

Louis, indeed, knew his father, and although accustomed to his ungentle admonitions, still he never heard them repeated without being awed by their force ; but he only replied, with an expression of deep feeling, " I trust, my father, that you will never be disappointed in a son whose pride has ever been your approbation and esteem ; and when I lose the one I may justly forfeit all claim to the other." His countenance here brightened, as he looked forward to the career of honour which his noble mind felt so ambitious to pursue.

The next morning Herbert and Ellen rose to give the last greeting to their visitors, and as they followed them to the gate, Herbert took the hand of his cousin, and said, " Louis, from this time let us be as brothers."

“ Be it so,” replied Louis, “ and may we faithfully preserve the tie ; but we shall, I trust, soon meet again ”—then following his father to the carriage, he was soon out of sight.

Mrs. Irwyn seemed much depressed, and her children almost as grave, on entering the breakfast-room, which was now so scantily peopled. They could talk of nothing but their cousins. “ O mamma,” said Herbert, “ I wish you could have seen more of Louis as he really is. How much I enjoyed being alone with him ! to be sure, he is a little too romantic, but then he is so good ; before his father he is always so silent, that none can, I think, quite appreciate his mind, unless they hear his sentiments unchecked by the presence of that rigid old disciplinarian. Well, after all, I may be glad that I am to be a soldier, for perhaps Louis and I may be in the same regiment some of these days ; I should like to go to Switzerland with him, although I laughed at him about it.”

“ I only hope then,” replied Ellen, “ that your regiment will not be commanded by the Baron, otherwise you will soon be disciplined into better quarters. What a cross old savage he is ! I am sure if I were Louis, I would never do anything to please him until he learnt to speak properly to me.”

“He is indeed,” replied Herbert, “a little too severe, but he is nevertheless an excellent parent; and Louis is not quite like you, my dear Ellen, to be turned from the course of duty by the first rough breeze that happens to assail him.”

“That may be true enough, brother, for I don’t like your rough winds; so I shall always go where I may be best sheltered from them.”

“A good Christian, Ellen, would not say that; and perhaps rough winds would be better for you than your soft breezes, to which, if principle does not guard you, you may yet fall a sacrifice.”

“Nonsense, Herbert!” exclaimed Mrs. Irwyn, suddenly waking from her reverie; “for patience’ sake, don’t learn to be a methodist: one is really sickened by the very name of religion, there is now so much of it on the tongue of everybody; yet I do not see that the world is the better for it.”

Poor Herbert was effectually silenced by this unexpected reproof of his mother; he made no reply, but sighed, as he could not but make the comparison between her and Mrs. Seymour, who had taught him that God should be in all our thoughts, and that every Christian should use the

utmost influence of religious exhortations, to caution others against the neglect of the "one thing needful," that the weakest instrument might assist in the great workmanship of universal salvation. "Why then," thought he, "does mamma like us to live as strangers to the word of God?" But the question could admit of no argument; he therefore hastily finished his breakfast, and left the room.

Ellen, who could bear anything better than to see Herbert pained, followed him, and knowing the cause, by way of counteracting it, put her arm affectionately round his neck, and said, "Dearest brother, I am quite in the humour for reading to-day, so will you come and hear me finish the history of Joseph! You know we have only two more chapters: then you can help me to bring in my geraniums, for I am afraid the frost will spoil them."

Herbert understood her, for thus she always acted towards those who loved her: he wished, indeed, that the love of duty were more frequently the principle of action, but he accepted the moment of inclination, and followed her to the study. On the same evening Ellen was much surprised by the arrival of a huge deal case, directed to her, "To be delivered with care." A thousand ex-

clamations ensued, as to what it could possibly contain, but on being opened, it was found to be a cottage piano, in which was a note addressed to Ellen, from General de Rancey, begging her acceptance of a farewell token of his interest and esteem. "How very, very kind!" said she, reading it, while her dark eyes sparkled with joy. "Mamma, do look at this beautiful piano! and it is quite my own. Oh! how wicked I have been to hate General de Rancey; but I will never call him an old savage again."

Russell and every one in the house were summoned to look at her magnificent present, nor did her rhapsodies cease till the novelty of the delight was over.

The time now approached when Herbert's return to school again clouded the happiness of Ellen: she sobbed bitterly at parting with him, and declared, that she would scarcely speak to any human being till he came back again, for she could never enjoy one happy hour without him. At the moment of her sorrow, no doubt, she believed all these resolutions would duly come to pass, but how many minutes after her brother's departure they were preserved, we need not inquire. Poor Herbert felt as much, though he

expressed less, at parting with her ; while Mrs. Irwyn evinced precisely the same degree of regret on his leaving her, as she had done of pleasure when he first returned from Portsmouth.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. IRWYN, soon after Herbert's departure, began the "delightful task" of Ellen's education. Many weeks, however, had not elapsed, before she found the occupation heavy; it was therefore pursued without method or perseverance. She had neither temper to bear its trials, nor patience to subdue its difficulties; so that she would often submit to disobedience and idleness, rather than give herself the trouble of checking them. Ellen saw this, and became alike careless in her studies and indifferent to her mother's approbation, since she saw it depended more on the humour of the moment, than on her own exertions to do better: thus affection gradually decreased between them, and while Mrs. Irwyn thought her child the most tiresome, and her own fate the most cruel, in the world, Ellen fancied her mother no longer loved

her, and soon yearned to find some object, on whom she could lean with that affection which she believed was the greatest charm of life. While with Herbert, his every word was a law to her ; she had promised him never to be swayed by the example of Caroline Herbert, and, at the time of promising, she resolved not to encourage an intimacy, exposing her to its dangers ; but weak in resolution, and too strong in self-confidence, she yielded to the charm of flattery ; and the deceit, which once she so truly abhorred, at last found in her heart ten thousand excuses ; contempt became pity, and gratified by the professions of her friend, pity soon led to affection : so that, although she confessed that Caroline was very artful, and had many faults, yet she felt confident of not herself falling under their influence, and therefore thought it no harm, at least, to love that *goodness of heart*, which, notwithstanding all inconsistency, still led Caroline to love her. Circumstances too threw them together, consequently she supposed all obligation of keeping her promise to Herbert cancelled ; and consoling herself with a hope that she might perhaps induce Caroline to love what was good, and forsake evil, she dreamt not of the possibility that Caroline might tempt *her* to evil, and lead her from the path of duty.

Mrs. Irwyn's health began so perceptibly to decline under the constant fretfulness of unsubdued anxiety, that Dr. Herbert, anxious as far as possible to avert further misery from her, persuaded her to relinquish the charge of Ellen's studies, and to allow of her pursuing them with Caroline, whose governess might, he thought, for a trifling increase of salary, consent to receive Ellen for a few hours every morning. To this plan Mrs. Irwyn gladly acceded, so that the pursuits of these young people soon led to that mutual interest which is generally followed by a closer union of affection. Caroline was delighted in having a sharer in all her pursuits, and seeing how easily she could acquire unbounded influence over her companion, failed not to secure what might prove so essentially useful to herself.

Months thus rolled on, and five years from this period found the minds of these young people modelled in some degree according to the tuition which each had received. Miss Graham was one of those who studied the whims of the parent in the education of her pupils: she soon discovered the bias of each, and though she could not but feel the superiority of Ellen in talents and disposition, she dared not openly avow it, but was too politic to suffer her to outshine Caroline in those

accomplishments which were thought essential for attraction. She knew that, to secure herself a comfortable situation, she must be more the guardian over Caroline's person and personal graces than over her mind or heart ; and as the young lady had now learnt to estimate her beauty too highly to neglect its preservation, or to require any longer the constant admonitions of her mother to " hold up her head," and study dress as the most necessary part of a " fashionable education," the change was attributed to Miss Graham's diligent attention and care ; consequently she was a great favourite ; and, sufficiently satisfied with herself in pleasing the parents, she never suffered any qualms of conscience to question the sin she was daily committing, in thus feeding the errors of a young mind for which she stood so awfully responsible.

Dr. Herbert interfered only in one point respecting Caroline's studies, which was, in strictly prohibiting the admission of novels of any description into the school-room ; for the rest, being satisfied that Caroline promised to be the most elegant waltzer, and the best private singer in the county, he inquired not whether her heart were properly directed to the " one thing needful," or her mind stored with such useful information as

would fit her for the duties of a Christian, accountable for the use of every talent ; so that she was trained a stranger to the one, and ignorant in all the rest. Thus, left to the dangers of so false an education, it was not surprising that the natural foibles of her disposition strengthened with her age, and that she became more and more an adept in dissimulation and selfishness ; while poor Ellen, who found herself fatally deceived in the hope of raising Caroline to her own standard of principle, lost that which she possessed, and fell under the influence of so specious a guide !

Alas ! when in self-confidence we trust to our own strength, and reject the only means of safety taught us in the Gospel, where is the boasted power of reason ? Ellen's security was in herself, and her strength was "very weakness." The falsehood, from which she would once have shrunk, was first excused, and at last not only became familiar to her by example, but was almost as shamelessly adopted in herself.

Mrs. Irwyn was seldom seen out of her own room ; nervous and restless, she sought only such amusements as might lull her mind into momentary forgetfulness, although, like an opiate, they did but enfeeble its every energy. In ill health she found a plea for indolence and in-

dulgence ; novels and netting were the only resources she could find to supply those of the “ healthy and happy,” and to kill time, which hung so heavily over a life she believed bereft of every blessing. She knew—that is, she supposed—Ellen was profitably engaged in the hands of a governess : but she neither gave nor encouraged that confidence which so powerfully unites the heart of child to parent ; so that Ellen seldom ventured to communicate the proceedings of the day, because her mother never seemed interested in them, and could “ bear no worry in her present weak state.”

Caroline was no sooner of an age to question why novels could be a prohibition to her, than she longed to taste the forbidden fruit ; and seldom at a loss where ingenuity in deceit was required, she contrived to bribe a servant to procure one from the library, and induced Ellen to read it with her, as she “ only just wanted to see what a novel was.” One transgression ever leads to more. Novels became the favourite recreation ; and when Caroline could no longer obtain them safely from the library, she thought of another expedient, in making Ellen take them from her mother’s room. To this she at first positively objected ; but Caroline was not to be so easily

thwarted, and knowing that Mrs. Irwyn was then reading "Rob Roy," she pleaded, "that it was the very book of all others she so much wished to read, and that if Ellen would but get it for her, it really should be the very last." Still Ellen resisted, saying, "that if discovered, her mother would never forgive her."

"Then you cannot love me," replied Caroline, "although you profess that you would never think of your own interests where mine are concerned; yet now you will not meet a trifling hazard to secure me hours of pleasure."

"Oh! Caroline," said Ellen, "indeed you do not know me; but since you doubt my affection, I will venture to prove it, even at the risk of running myself into a fine scrape."

"If I really thought so," replied Caroline, "I would willingly give up my own enjoyments; but, indeed, dearest Ellen, you are too fastidious, and how will you go through the world, if always so afraid of a little scolding? However, oblige me this once; procure the book, and should you be detected, all the blame shall rest solely on me, as I shall declare that you had no hand in getting it."

"Dear, generous girl," exclaimed Ellen, "I believe you would; but do not suppose that I

could be so very mean ; I will get the book, cost me what it will ; only remember it is to be the last we read."

The friends parted. Ellen returned to her mother's room ; but, dissatisfied with herself, and conscious of premeditated deceit, she entered with a clouded countenance, and a heart ill at ease. Mrs. Irwyn was too much engaged with letters, which she had received from Wales, to notice it, and giving her a packet from Fanny Seymour, she told her that Lady Warton had written to invite them all to pass the ensuing summer at Llanvair.

" And shall you go, mamma ?" said Ellen.

" I shall never return to Wales," replied Mrs. Irwyn ; " but I can have no objection to your going with your brother and cousin Louis, if I can meet with a proper conveyance for you."

Ellen made no further reply, for she was not quite sure whether the visit would be one of much pleasure to her. She had heard Lady Warton ridiculed by the Herberts, as being methodistical and particular, and felt somewhat afraid to encounter all the common-place pursuits of so sober a family : she therefore silently left the room, to read Fanny's letter, which was written in that style of unaffected simplicity, which could leave no

doubt of the sincerity and unsophisticated principles of the writer.

Ellen sighed as she read the well-described happiness attached to the duties of visiting the sick and relieving the poor, and to the rational enjoyment of a home like St. Llenard's: but, thought she, Fanny has no one to misunderstand *her* wish of doing right, therefore she can do her duty. Well, after all, I think I shall like to go to Llanvair, and I am determined, after this once, never again to yield to Caroline's nonsense."

On the same evening, while sitting with her mother, very intent on forming better resolutions for the future, Russell came in with a message from Caroline, who was in the parlour waiting to speak to her; she ran down, wondering what could occasion so late a visit.

Caroline shut the door as Ellen entered, and looking round, as if fearful of being overheard, said, in a low voice, "Do you know that Frederic and Charles Maynard are come, and we have a delightful scheme for to-morrow morning, which you must share with us, for I can have no pleasure without you; so say not a word against it, as come you must."

"Where?" asked Ellen.

“ You know,” replied Caroline, “ that there is a camp of gipsies at Amwell, about a mile on the other side of Durnford, and the boys are going to have their fortunes told ; now that is the very thing, above all others, that I want to do ; and by getting up very early I think we can contrive it famously, be home to breakfast as if nothing had happened, and neither your mother nor Miss Graham need know anything of the matter.”

“ Oh ! Caroline,” exclaimed Ellen, “ I dare not go, indeed I dare not, for you know mamma is very superstitious about gipsies, and would never forgive me if I went near them.”

“ That is the way you always throw cold water upon our pleasures,” said Caroline, peevishly, “ and will never make the smallest sacrifice for my happiness, while I am constantly trying to promote yours ; and even now, for your sake, I have, in defiance of all risk, run off in constant dread of seeing papa at my heels, and well I am rewarded for my pains.”

“ Caroline,” replied Ellen, mournfully, “ I believe we should both be happier if we did not run so many risks for each other ; I know, indeed, that you are always very kind to me, therefore do not say that I would make no sacrifices for you, when I love to give you pleasure ; but as Frederic

is with you, surely my going must be immaterial, and I know that mamma would be seriously offended if she knew it."

"Yes, but who is to tell her?" said Caroline; "there we have been planning everything for your comfort, and I am sure it would do you no harm for once to walk two miles before breakfast, without reckoning every stone you pass, for your mother to moralise upon."

Ellen would have given the universe if at that moment she could have found resolution to resist: yet to be accused of ingratitude by one whom she really loved, was to her worse than all. "Well, then," said she, "I will go this once, on condition that you do not ask me to have my fortune told."

Caroline, always rejoicing at the influence which she possessed over Ellen, finally arranged that she should meet her at six the next morning, and affectionately kissing her, she departed.

Poor Ellen soon bade her mother good-night, anxious to be relieved from the presence of one, against whom she was thus so wilfully transgressing. But when she was left to herself, the "still small voice" of conscience could not be so silenced, and, impressed with the sense of her own weakness, she burst into an agony of tears.

Did she, in that hour of self-abasement, raise a supplicating prayer for pardon to Him, in whose sight one word of heartfelt penitence is of so great a price? Did she seize that moment of contrition, and in pleading her own insufficiency to do well, implore a rescue from surrounding temptations? or did she, in confessing the weakness of her resolutions, seek, with an earnest reliance on the mercy of her Heavenly Father, that strength, promised to all who ask it in the Redeemer's name, as a never-failing help in every time of need? Had she done so, ah! who can tell the blessings which might have followed the petitions! but she turned away from an offended God, and wilfully met, rather than resisted, the current of temptation. Thus prayer, which had lately become, what it ever must be, to every impenitent transgressor, a task rather than a privilege, was now totally neglected, and, for the first time, she dared not offer up her evening supplications at the throne of grace. She was not yet, however, so hardened in duplicity as to rest peacefully under its sting: wretched and restless, vainly did she court sleep, for in every little noise she heard, her imagination formed ten thousand phantoms of impending danger; trembling and terrified, she longed to ask protection; yet how could she expect it from a

God whom she had disobeyed and neglected. She could not pray ; for sin was still premeditated, and how could both prevail ? She therefore could only await, with a beating heart, the return of daylight, resolving that nothing should again tempt her to meet the wretchedness of an upbraiding conscience.

Daylight at length appeared, and dispelled alike her fears, and her resolutions of beginning a new day with a new life : for alas ! life once abused is not so easily renewed ; and again neglecting the only means by which she might have been strengthened to fulfil those resolutions, she hastily dressed herself, and joined Caroline, though too tired and spiritless to find any delight in the promised scheme of pleasure. Arrived at Amwell, Caroline was the first to cross the gipsy's hand, who, being sufficiently acquainted with the family at Durnford Rectory to relate a few facts, took care to follow them by prophecies of future aggrandisement, and a good marriage of course.

“ Now, Ellen,” said Frederic, “ pray under what happy planet were *you* born ? ”

“ I am not going to have my fortune told,” replied Ellen. “ I merely came here to please Caroline.”

“Do not ask it, Frederic,” said Caroline, “for Ellen is afraid lest a gipsy’s spirit should follow her into her mother’s room, and tell tales of our truancy.”

“What! still under nursery government, Ellen?” said Frederic; “or is fortune-telling one of the sins over which Herbert has written—beware?”

“Neither the one nor the other,” replied Ellen, timidly; “but I have no wish to see into the future.”

“Come, lady,” said the gipsy, encouraged by a look from Frederic, “cross my palm with silver, for many a bright day will pay it back. Lady, I can tell you who will soon win some pretty smiles, and give a heart well worth them.”

“Or rather, my good woman, tell her where she may find a father confessor to give her absolution for the sin of following our wicked ways,” said Frederic, sarcastically.

Ellen was not proof against ridicule, and finding that her resistance only exposed her to such pointed sarcasm, she endeavoured to rally her spirits, and at last, yielding to importunity, she gave her hand to the gipsy.

On returning from Amwell, Caroline proposed taking the path along the shore; this she did, with the view of walking alone with Charles

Maynard ; so that poor Ellen, as an additional mortification, was left to the care of Frederic, whose society was at all times hateful to her ; but never did she feel less capable of bearing it than under present circumstances ; for, as the example of dissipated associates had not improved him, he appeared more disagreeable and insolent than ever.

They had now lost sight of their companions, but, turning an angle to take the nearest path to the Hermitage, Frederic suddenly exclaimed, “ By George ! there is Herbert Irwyn.”

“ Who ?—my brother ?” said Ellen, faintly, “ Oh ! I *hope* not ;” but Frederic heeded not the mournful tone with which she spoke, while running forward as if to meet his best friend on earth, he declared that “ he was confoundedly glad to see him.”

Herbert coolly returned his salutation ; looked surprised at seeing his sister so escorted and confused ; and as a painful suspicion crossed his mind that all was not right, he said, “ Surely you are not alone, Ellen ?” But Ellen answered not, for, before she could recover from her agitation, Caroline came running down the hill, and, full of spirits, greeted Herbert with a most courteous

smile, adding, on seeing Ellen's tearful face, "Now, Herbert, you must not betray us; we have been on a little secret expedition, and if you get Ellen into a scrape, I shall wage eternal war against you; so pray keep our counsel, and let silence be the watchword."

"Ellen, I hope, has done nothing to incur a dread of my betraying her," gravely replied Herbert; "but she will best explain your mysterious charge of silence."

"The gipsy, however, has been true to her trust," said Frederic, turning to Ellen, "for behold your father confessor is already at hand; but come, Caroline; I vote more speed homeward, as morning air gives a keen appetite." So saying, he sprang forward, and Caroline kissing her hand to Ellen, bade her be of good courage, and was, with her companion, soon out of sight.

Silently, but with far different feelings, did Herbert and Ellen return home. On entering, Ellen could only venture to say, that she would go and tell her mother of his return.

"My mother knows that I am here," said Herbert, retaining his sister's hand; "but, being very unwell, she wishes to remain undisturbed till she has had her breakfast; and I believe she has

been obliged to depute Russell as tea-maker, as you were not to be found : therefore, Ellen, you may perhaps spare me a few minutes, to explain the meaning of what I have just seen and heard."

" Oh ! Herbert," said Ellen, in a tone of deep distress, " I am wretched, and can never again ask you to love me, for you do not know how very foolish I have been."

" Whatever be your fault, my poor Ellen," replied Herbert, " I trust the misery it has made you suffer will prove its remedy, by a timely warning of the evil consequences which, sooner or later, must follow every wilful dereliction from truth or principle. Speak to me then, I beseech you, not as to one severe to judge, but as to a friend and brother, anxious,—fondly anxious beyond expression, my Ellen,—to see you happy, and to know you blest, in the highest sense of blessedness ; but tell me,—oh ! conceal nothing from me,—is it possible that the depraved Frederic Herbert can have obtained an ascendancy over a heart guileless as yours once was ?"

" No," said Ellen, " thank Heaven, *that* reproach may be spared ; for never was any one so hateful to me as Frederic Herbert is, and ever will be ; and yet I am not less artful, less sinful than he." Herbert, relieved from the most painful

apprehensions by this assurance of his sister, and alarmed by her extreme paleness, now only endeavoured to encourage her, by every assurance of interest and affection.

“ Dear Herbert,” said the distressed girl, “ you are indeed always kind, always affectionate ; and though I am sure you can scarcely forgive my sinful want of firmness, oh ! do not, I entreat you, leave me quite to myself, or cease to love me, for truly you are my best, my dearest friend.”

She then related to him all that had passed since the preceding morning, generously heightening her own by veiling much of Caroline’s fault.

Herbert heard her with mingled feelings of pain and surprise ; but, as he was sure on whom the blame principally rested, the generous confession of Ellen excited in his anxious heart a hope, that if only removed from the dangerous examples by which she was unhappily surrounded, her ingenuous character might yet yield itself to the influence of higher principles. Painful as were the sufferings by which she now seemed really overcome, he could not but hail them as an earnest of future amendment : he would not, therefore, check their force, but inwardly imploring the diving blessing upon them, he replied, “ Ellen, I cannot indeed justify your conduct, but faithfully

will I discharge the sacred trust to which so near and dear a tie as that of brother has bound me. I will not, therefore, attempt to palliate your error by the opiate of false excuses, which could only lull, not remove, the wholesome sorrow of a stricken conscience; no, rather let me lead you once more to that throne of grace, where such sorrow is ever an acceptable sacrifice; yet think not, my beloved Ellen, that reformation is a light or easy duty; contrition without amendment is, in the pure sight of God, little better than hypocrisy: much self-control, and patient submission to much that may be painfully humiliating, must follow the conviction of error, or present self-abasement will be ineffectual for future preservation. Depend upon it, that when you first neglected the duties of religion, circumstances were permitted to strengthen the fatal influence of sin. God never *leads* us into temptation, but, if we refuse His guidance, what earthly power can save us from its dangers? In ceasing from prayer, do we not presumptuously suppose ourselves competent to walk unassisted in the narrow path of holiness, and thus literally deny the necessity of His providence? and in withholding praise, which is the only incense man can offer to God, do we not forfeit all claim to His daily protection, by ungratefully receiving that

which is so bountifully bestowed?—This, Ellen, is no vain theory ; it is not the mere language of overwrought feeling : it is *truth*, and truth which *must* be obeyed, or wretchedness be our portion for ever.”

“ I know it well, and feel it, Herbert,” said Ellen, in a tone of the deepest anguish ; “ but tell me how I can atone for the past, and indeed I will do anything, everything you can require.”

“ It is not *my* will, my dear Ellen,” replied Herbert, “ that you must consult. I can but pity, and warn you of the consequences which follow sin, but it is God to whom you must submit, and *His* laws must direct the future. First cast away that self-confidence which has hitherto deceived you, and led you to protract duties, because you believed that of yourself you could return to them at any more convenient season. Go to the Father of mercies, and seek that strength with which He only can endue us ; and then let the contrition you profess be followed by an immediate performance of active obedience. Go and confess to your heavenly Parent, and then to the mother against whom you have transgressed.”

“ But mamma knows nothing of it,” said Ellen, “ and indeed, I dare not tell her, for I know she would never forgive my having gone to the gipsy,

in defiance of what I knew to be her strictest command ; she would not speak to me as you do, dear brother, and I am sure I could not now bear any severity.”

“ Ellen,” replied Herbert, with a look of heart-felt anxiety, “ such is error, that it ever makes us cowards in meeting its humiliations, and thus do we progressively advance in evil, because we are too proud, or too selfish, to yield to the conditions of acceptable repentance ! But I repeat, that if you sincerely wish to offer reparation, you must choose that, most pleasing to the Almighty, and *obey* the conditions of His forgiveness, in fulfilling your duty to all those placed, by His will, in authority over you. Shrink not, therefore, my Ellen, from completing the task of submission ; continued concealment would be continued sin ; and though your mother might, and probably will, severely reprimand your disobedience, yet patiently endeavour to meet the trial which you have brought upon yourself, and think of *One*, who is greater than any earthly parent, from whom ‘ no secret can be hid.’ In regard to the gipsy, you have indeed erred twofold ; although, I trust, more thoughtlessly so, than really aware of the sin, in which you have sanctioned another. for even supposing it were possible for human

foresight to penetrate the mysteries of the Most High, impious is the hand that would dare attempt to lift the veil which *He* has seen fit, in wisdom and in mercy unspeakable, to throw over the future. But added to this, think of the guilt into which, by encouragement, we lead those most unfortunate creatures, whose bread is thus earned by a life of falsehood and blasphemous presumption: yet a far more lenient judgment may justly fall on them, whose crime is perhaps committed in comparative ignorance of its extent, than on those who, under the privileges of a christian education, can thus provoke the indignation of Heaven."

Ellen listened with a feeling of almost enthusiastic reverence, to the emphatic and affectionate earnestness with which Herbert argued, and, after a few minutes of silent reflection, she exclaimed, "Brother, before this day closes, I will, or at least I will *endeavour* to fulfil every condition which you say is required. O! Herbert, if you were always with me, I think I could never do wrong."

"Do not say that, Ellen," replied her brother, "for it is not I who can change your heart, or sanctify your thoughts. Some allowance may, indeed, be made for you, under the situation in

which you have been placed, young, and open as you are to the specious endearments of a plausible companion ; but no one knows better than yourself how to discriminate between good and evil, and many were the advantages you received in your childhood from the pious instructions of our dear Mr. Seymour ; these you have neglected, if not forgotten, therefore you cannot too soon, or too earnestly, endeavour to recall and act upon them ; and blest as you are with intelligence to think and act for yourself, lean not on me, dear Ellen, lest your own judgment become subservient to the mere wishes of a brother, rather than to the holy will of your Heavenly Father."

Ellen had now almost caught the hallowed zeal of her brother, and felt as if she could perform every duty without difficulty ; ardent were her resolutions ; and, lighter in heart than she had been for some time past, she followed Herbert into the breakfast-room, and cheerfully partook of a meal which, but an hour ago, she had declared she would not touch.

Encouraged by Herbert, and strengthened by his admonitions, she retired soon after breakfast, to prepare herself for the dreaded interview with her mother. Anxious to convince Herbert that she was not too weak to follow resolutions seri-

ously made, she endeavoured to summon her utmost fortitude, that she might appear for once firm in the cause of duty. The struggle, however, was not unobserved by Herbert, though he forbore making any remarks which might damp her exertions. She had desired Russell to let her know when her mother was dressed, but, on receiving the summons, her boasted courage rather gave way. Many times did she reach her mother's door, and as often did she recede; but at last, ashamed of her irresolution, she entered with a beating heart, trembling in every nerve, inwardly saying, "Well, indeed, may Herbert call me weak."

Mrs. Irwyn immediately began complaining of her child's want of filial attention; and though Ellen, feeling but too truly the justice of the reproach, answered nothing in self-defence, yet it was not calculated to facilitate the task of confession. Mrs. Irwyn, roused by the unusual silence of Ellen, who seldom patiently received anything like reprimand, looked up, and, always anxiously alive to any apprehension where her children were concerned, she exclaimed, in a tone of alarm, "Ellen, my child, for patience' sake, why are you so deadly pale?" Ellen threw herself down, and hiding her face in her mother's lap, she sobbed

bitterly, and could only reply, "Because, mamma, I have been so very sinful; but pray forgive me, and indeed I will tell you all."

Mrs. Irwyn, satisfied that illness was not the cause of Ellen's altered countenance, and vexed at the unnecessary alarm it had created, felt little disposed to receive graciously any concession on the part of her child; she therefore only asked, in repulsing her, "Pray what have you been doing now? you are always running into mischief, and will, I know, be my death, before you have done."

To such a temper as poor Ellen's, this was a severe trial; but she thought of Herbert, and, sincerely desirous of atoning for her conduct, she patiently bore all discouragements, and told her mother everything respecting the clandestine excursion of the morning. Mrs. Irwyn listened silently till the gipsy was mentioned, when, without the least consideration for Ellen's candid and generous avowal of her fault, she expressed, in terms of the utmost violence, her surprise at so daring an act of disobedience. Ellen implored forgiveness in the most touching language of penitence, and had her mother then judiciously forgiven her, and seized that moment for gentle remonstrance,

it might, in a heart like Ellen's, have ensured the fullest return of gratitude and reformation : but when told that " her contrition was nothing more than a display of feeling, and an affectation of principle, merely because Herbert was at home to admire and believe it ;—that she was the misery of her mother's life, and that she was constantly irritating her weakened spirits by scenes only calculated to increase her disorder, yet all to no purpose ;"—she felt how unjustly was the reprimand administered, and having at length succeeded in obtaining, by her importunity and promises of future amendment, a very frigid sort of reconciliation, the poor girl left the room, to seek the encouraging kindness of her dear Herbert. She related to him all that had passed, adding, that never would she again expose herself to the mortifications of such unkind repulses, from a mother who seemed so little alive to parental tenderness.

" Indeed, Ellen," replied Herbert, " I hope that you will never expose yourself again to the necessity of meeting such mortifications as must ever follow disobedience ; but you have still much to conquer, much of self-will to subdue, before that peace of mind can be yours, which ever attends duties *well* performed. When you consider

the nature of your offence, your situation as a daughter, and the weak health of your mother, say, Ellen, who may with the greater justice complain of mortifications,—the disappointed parent whose comfort rested on her child, or the daughter who has denied it to her by a careless inattention to her wishes? Your mother may have been injudiciously severe, but the aggravation was great, and given by *you*; surely, my dear Ellen, you ought to receive, with feelings of humiliation—not *anger*—its consequent reproaches.” Ellen blushed, and as she confessed the justice of her brother’s arguments, felt how weak and self-willed were all her best resolutions; but still humbled in herself, never was she more completely subdued to obedience and submission.

Russell at that moment brought a note from Caroline, which required an immediate answer: it was as follows:—

“ Do, my dearest Ellen, send me by return of the bearer, the two first volumes of ‘ Rob Roy,’ which you promised me, as papa and mamma dine out to-day, and Miss Graham is gone home: therefore, as I shall be left alone, I do not see why I am not to have a holiday as well as my governess; so pray take compassion, for only think

how moped I shall be without the society of ‘Rob Roy.’

In great haste,

Ever yours,

CAROLINE.”

Ellen, somewhat confused, gave it to Herbert, and said, “What can I do, brother? If I break my promise, I know that Caroline will think me everything unkind and dishonourable, and feel really pained, as well as displeased, by my refusing so trifling a sacrifice, and as she promised it would be the last—”

“Can the sacrifice of truth, Ellen,” interrupted Herbert, “be called *trifling*?—a promise which is in itself sinful can never be binding. There is but one straightforward line of duty, and from this you must never swerve, if you desire peace of mind and the blessing of God. Answer Caroline by simply stating your inability to procure the book without disobeying and displeasing your mother; and that you exceedingly regret the promise you made respecting it. This will sufficiently express your own intention of discontinuing so unprofitable an amusement, and need not offend by appearing to dictate in her pursuits.”

This was accordingly done, because Herbert was at hand to urge it; though Ellen inwardly thought that she could more fearlessly have stood the risk of punishment once more, than the result of her refusal to one of Caroline's unreasonable temper. However, the day closed with far happier feelings than she had lately experienced; she could not but compare them with those of the preceding night, and having fervently implored the blessing of the Almighty upon her endeavours to do her duty, she slept in peace, secure in the protection of Him, to whom she had that day in sincere penitence returned.

Herbert passed the evening alone with his mother. Ellen was their principal subject of discussion, and he could not but see how injudiciously she was managed; but although he deeply regretted that so sweet a disposition was not under better guidance, yet he never ventured to express such sentiments before her. In consequence of Lady Warton's invitation, he had returned home with the hope of arranging some plan for its acceptance, being desirous of once more seeing his native place, and those early friends connected with it, previously to his going to India—perhaps for ever. All attempt, however, was ineffectual in persuading Mrs. Irwyn to join him in the visit,

but he now felt doubly anxious to take Ellen from the influence of Caroline Herbert, that, if possible, absence might break the spell that bound her to so dangerous a friendship. He therefore advised his mother to consent to her going to Wales for the summer, after which he thought a governess might be perfectly unnecessary, and then all necessity of her being so much at the Rectory would be obviated. Thus it was decided, that if Louis, who was included in the invitation, could obtain leave of absence, it should be accepted for the ensuing month; and, in the intermediate time, Herbert determined to find a plea for detaining Ellen as much as possible from the society of her favourite. Mrs. Irwyn faintly recollected having heard that a distant relative of Lady Warton, residing in the neighbourhood, intended going to Llanvair, in the course of a short time, but that lady, as a member of the Scottish Episcopalian Church, being considered a dissenter from our own, Mrs. Irwyn was scarcely prepared to accept such an escort for her daughter, however desirable to secure a female companion in so long a journey. Herbert, however, too anxious for Ellen's removal, soon overruled these scruples on his mother's part, and proposed going at once to Ashfield, to obtain every information from Mrs. War-

ton herself, being sufficiently acquainted with her character, to feel assured that she would kindly meet their wishes, if circumstances would admit of her taking Ellen, at least, as her fellow-traveller. This arrangement being settled, he retired for the night, deeply impressed with the incidents which had awakened so many painful forebodings respecting the destiny of Ellen, which seemed so strangely interwoven with good and evil.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning Herbert breakfasted early, to prepare for his expedition to Ashfield, a ride of seven miles, and told his mother that as he should be so far on the road, he thought he had better proceed five miles further, to cancel a debt of politeness, long since due to Lady Catherine Foster, and call at Laylands. Ellen, on hearing this, reminded Mrs. Irwyn of a promise she had made of inviting Lyna Stanhope to pass a few days with her, and now urged permission to ask it or the ensuing week : this being granted, Herbert proposed that as the morning was so fine, he should borrow Dr. Herbert's carriage, take Ellen with him, and bring back Lyna, should such a proposition meet the consent of Lady Catherine. This being duly arranged, Ellen accompanied her brother, in high spirits at the thoughts of thus

having another holiday, and a further reprieve from meeting her incensed friend.

Herbert, being personally a stranger to Mrs. Warton, felt, as he approached her little cottage, some awkwardness in introducing himself on an errand which might appear intrusive ; but all such feelings of apprehension, soon yielded to those of ease and assurance, as Mrs. Warton, to whom he was well known by name and character, received him with the most friendly smile of cordiality and kindness. Although in the decline of life, there was still something peculiarly prepossessing in her whole appearance, while a slight accent of the Highland dialect, retained from childhood, lent additional softness to her low, but musical tone of address, which fell most sweetly on the ear : and her countenance was so expressive of a benevolent heart, that misfortune fearlessly appealed to her for support and counsel ; and timid merit delighted in seeking her encouragement and esteem. She was generally considered a dissenter, by the high Church party, as she still adhered to the communion of her native kirk ; nevertheless, she was often heard to express a preference for our own beautiful Liturgy, and joined heart and soul in the services of her parish church ; but, devoted to the principles of evangelical religion, and to

the quiet duties of a most useful life, she took no part in the frivolous engagements of the world, and was therefore often an object of its heartless ridicule, even while few could refuse to acknowledge her claim of universal respect.

Ellen, who took little share in the conversation, sat silently observant of all that was before her. Such had been her idea of a "puritan"—as she had heard Mrs. Warton described—that she was surprised to see the one now present, so cheerful, so hospitable, and her cottage so elegantly, though simply adorned with fresh-gathered flowers, the earliest of the spring. On the table, indeed, lay several missionary and Jewish reports; a Bible; some papers on which were written "school accounts;" and a basket full of work, evidently intended as clothing for the poor: yet Mrs. Warton addressed her young guests, with both feeling and good sense, perfectly free from any affectation of language and manner, calculated to excite an impression of unnatural seriousness.

On learning the purport of Herbert's visit, she assured him, that she would feel much pleasure, not only in taking charge of Ellen, but in having himself and cousin also, as her fellow-travellers to Llanvair; but in regard to the time, she regretted the necessity of leaving it very undecided; add-

ing, " I have undertaken a little cause in behalf of a young orphan, now under my roof, who appears to me, to be suffering under some injustice, and while I have the least hope of being useful to her under such circumstances, I feel imperatively called upon to remain at home ; I have therefore been induced to defer my journey for a few weeks later, nevertheless, I think, I may promise being at liberty, at the very latest period, about the end of May."

She then told Herbert, in answer to his inquiries respecting her visit to Llanvair, that she should merely be a passing visitor at Lady Warton's, as she was going northward to see a niece, who, having recently lost her husband, and being in very ill health, stood in need of her assistance and society. She pressed her guests to share with her a homely dinner, but this being declined, luncheon was substituted. Ellen looked up surprised as Mrs. Warton asked God's blessing previously to her partaking of the little meal before them ; it was, however, cheerfully enjoyed, and Ellen went away delighted with her new friend, who was not, after all, she thought, so very puritanical, excepting, indeed, " saying grace before luncheon." During her ride to Laylands she spoke of little else than of the pleasure with which

she anticipated her excursion to Wales, and declared she would never again laugh at a methodist, if all were as gentle and good as that "sweet woman" Mrs. Warton.

Very differently, though with much politeness, were they received by Lady Catherine Foster, who, with perhaps an equal share of dignity, possessed less of that suavity and mildness which ever make us feel at ease, even with those of exalted rank. Ellen, in a few minutes, mentioned her mother's request that Miss Stanhope might be allowed to return with them for a few days, should it meet the approbation of her ladyship; but was only answered in a constrained and evidently agitated tone, that Miss Stanhope had left her.

"Is she gone to the Island," inquired Ellen, "and will her stay from Laylands be long?"

"She does not again return to it," replied Lady Catherine, endeavouring to suppress something of displeasure; and raising herself with a haughtiness of manner, added, "The air of Laylands is, I believe, considered too bleak for the tender constitution of Miss Stanhope; but she is now at Ashfield, I suppose, where you may probably hear her pleasure respecting your mother's invitation."

Ellen, silenced by a look from Herbert, forbore all further inquiries ; disappointed in her anticipated pleasure, she sat, during the remainder of her visit, silently impatient to be gone. Little of conversation passed on either side, and seeing that all was not right, Herbert, after a few common-place remarks, took his leave. Ellen was now all impatience to hear why Lyna was thus removed from Laylands ; and always interested in every cause that seemed unfortunate, she was miserable under her present forebodings. " Yet, surely," said she, " misfortune can scarcely have reached the envied, the happy Lyna Stanhope."

" In this life," replied Herbert, " all are subject to vicissitudes, but I know of none more exposed to them than an envied favourite. I would not hastily condemn in the present instance, but something evidently has occurred of no trifling nature, and I can scarcely conceive that any circumstance can have deprived Lyna of such a home, where for years she has been almost the idol of her generous benefactress, without much of serious fault in herself."

" Oh ! Herbert," suddenly exclaimed Ellen, " Lyna Stanhope must be the very orphan in whose cause, that sweet angel of a woman is en-

gaged! Do, brother, return through Ashfield, and take her home with us, for you know Lady Catherine said she was there, and, poor girl, she must be very unhappy, she was so fond of Laylands."

To this plan Herbert objected, as, being rather more considerate than his young sister, he wisely suggested the improbability of Lyna's leaving Mrs. Warton under present circumstances; and to propose it might appear both indelicate and unfeeling; but he promised Ellen to lose no time in making inquiries respecting her; and accordingly at an early hour of the ensuing morning Herbert again rode over to Ashfield, and found Mrs. Warton already prepared for going out, as if waiting some appointment. He apologised for his intrusion at such a moment, but when she heard the object of his visit, she told him she was only waiting the arrival of a postchaise to go to Laylands, that she might at once learn the real cause of Lyna's removal; "But," added she, "if you will try me to-day as a fellow-traveller, I shall not be sorry to have a companion in so formidable an errand, and during our ride I will give you all the information I have been able to gather respecting Miss Stanhope, in whom I cannot but feel interested, not only as having known her poor

mother, but I confess it appears to me, that much of mistake has arisen in this affair, and perhaps we may find her less to blame than is represented."

Herbert willingly acceded to her request, and when seated in the carriage, he repeated his anxiety to hear something of Miss Stanhope's history; "Although," said he, "I know little of her, having only occasionally seen her at Laylands, where she appeared almost idolised. I thought her a very unassuming girl, and always admired the carelessness with which she received the flattery to which she was constantly exposed by those who were desirous of pleasing Lady Catherine; but I confess that I should suppose no one but herself could have prejudiced Lady Catherine against her,—what then is the cause assigned for her removal?"

"One that appears to me perfectly inconsistent with what I know of both parties," replied Mrs. Warton. "Lyna is accused of having complained of her situation at Laylands, and consequently is thought a most ungrateful girl: she has not lately appeared in her usual spirits, and Lady Catherine, believing the reports against her corroborated by such circumstances, refuses to receive her again under her roof; but perhaps I can

trace the source of all this mischief, and therefore feel myself called upon to advocate an orphan's cause."

"Is she a relative of Lady Catherine, that she was adopted by her?" asked Herbert.

"None whatever," replied Mrs. Warton; "she, poor girl! never knew her mother, who died soon after her birth, and seven years after she was left an orphan, to the care of Mr. Morton, an intimate friend of Mr. Stanhope; but upon his quitting England under adverse circumstances, Lady Catherine, pleased with the artless simplicity of the child, and commiserating her melancholy situation, generously offered to adopt her, promising that while she lived she would be a mother to her; and truly has she fulfilled the utmost of her engagement, for Lyna has shared, as her own child, her home, her fortune, and her confidence, until this moment, when all seems lost to her at once by some mysterious agency, which at present lies undetected."

"But who could have been so cruel as to frame an accusation of such serious consequences, without some foundation of truth to warrant it?" said Herbert.

"Envy, my dear sir," replied Mrs. Warton, "can build a huge fabric of evil on a very narrow

foundation, and ever chooses the sweetest cup of happiness, in which to throw its poison. Lyna, I believe, has for some time been its object: too generous to be suspicious, and too disinterested to guard against appearances, she has probably been imprudent; but living secluded from the society in which she has been placed, I have really had no opportunity of personally judging her general conduct; I therefore wish to act impartially, and form my opinion from circumstances as they stand with both parties, that truth, not prejudice, may decide my sentence for or against the delinquent, and reason, not report, actuate my feelings towards her."

Laylands was now in sight, which prevented further conversation, and, followed by Herbert, Mrs. Warton met Lady Catherine with that dignified composure which ever accompanies true greatness of mind, employed on an errand of justice or benevolence.

But we will now enter into a few particulars of the circumstances which thus claimed the interference of Mrs. Warton; and give a brief outline of the history of Lady Catherine Foster and her orphan protégée.

Lady Catherine was an elderly woman, but still bore traces of much genuine elegance both of

person and manners. She was the only daughter of the late Lord Denby, and inheriting from him an uncommon share of family pride, assumed the appearance of a haughtiness that often made her an object of awe rather than of love, till the real kindness of her disposition could be more thoroughly understood: she possessed a powerful and highly cultivated mind, and a heart capable of strong affection, though it was not easily excited; yet, where she loved, it was with enthusiasm, and consequently expecting a devoted return, she was the more susceptible to disappointment. She prided herself on being a strict adherent of the "high church," and no one more punctually, or with more devotion, attended to all its ordinances; but she deemed it quite unpardonable in any one of her own doctrine to be seen engaged hand in hand with dissenting societies; and though she would willingly give ten or twenty pounds to our parent institution for promoting Christian Knowledge, she would never bestow one on foreign missionaries—unconnected with the Church—because she said "they only encouraged schism and seceders:" but still she was truly benevolent, and notwithstanding these few inconsistencies of character, she was justly beloved in her own circle, and universally respected by all who knew her.

Her affection and solicitude had hitherto centered in Miss Stanhope, from the hour in which she had formed the scheme of educating and adopting her as her own child, and she had rested with a fond delight on a vision too romantic to be realised, that Lyna would grow up devoted singly to her benefactress, without a wish, thought, or hope, beyond the interests of Laylands.

Being the only surviving descendant of Lord Denby, she possessed a considerable estate, and having no other relative than a nephew, settled in India, whose profligate habits and want of respect towards herself had so completely weaned him from her affection, that she often said he need expect no future consideration from her, she had many to court her favour, under the hope of being eventually benefited by their attentions. Amongst these was a Mrs. Grentham, a young widow, who from a long and early intimacy seemed to claim a preference; but as Lady Catherine had always declared her independence respecting the disposal of her property, it was never known to whom it would finally devolve.

Mrs. Grentham, a most selfish, designing, and politic woman, heard, with many a sore foreboding, of the growing and devoted fondness with which Lyna was regarded by Lady Catherine:

and alarmed by the frequent insinuations of her friend Miss Herald, (who looked forward to being one day her companion,) "that Lyna had twined herself (she would answer for it) by many a well-executed artifice round the heart of Lady Catherine," she began to see the probability of all this; and on hearing it said that Miss Stanhope would no doubt inherit a considerable fortune from her benefactress, she was resolved to watch every opportunity of discovering the truth, and if Lyna had dared, (which Miss Herald assured her was the case,) to spread such a report, she must be wholly undeserving of further encouragement. To effect her purpose, she determined upon a proposal of visiting Laylands, and to pass a few weeks with Lady Catherine, on the plea that unavoidable engagements might otherwise deprive her of the pleasure of seeing her ladyship for some months; and thus she might be enabled to judge more satisfactorily of Lyna's situation, without creating the suspicions which inquiries through others might do. This was accepted, and accordingly she passed the Christmas month at Laylands, during which time finding Lyna consistently affectionate to her benefactress, and unpretending in herself, she could discover nothing in her conduct to justify any suspicion against

her. Lyna had, indeed, too long been accustomed to the fond devotion of Lady Catherine, to experience the slightest deviation from it without pain, yet the most fastidious observer could never accuse her of anything like servility or flattery. She looked up to her benefactress as if all her happiness centered in her kindness, but never having been led to expect the continuance of the comforts by which she was surrounded, beyond the lifetime of Lady Catherine, she often dwelt on the melancholy anticipation of an event, which she believed would at once deprive her of so beloved a friend, home, and all its blessings. This had probably counteracted the dangers to which her situation exposed her, so that, humble in herself, she commanded at least the respect even of those to whom she was an object of envy. All this was not lost upon Lady Catherine, who, in proportion to the delicacy of her charge, endeavoured to remove every feeling of dependence by the most marked partiality. Her kindness, however, only increased the umbrage against Lyna which it gave to many who witnessed and feared its result, and finding no plea openly to censure her, they at length imputed to art, that disinterestedness to which they themselves were strangers.

Thus had Lyna reached her nineteenth year, when, for the first time, she separated from her benefactress to visit some early friends of her mother, lately settled in the Isle of Wight, where she became not only an object of interest, but of affection ; and feeling almost alone in the world, there was a charm so new to her in hearing her mother's name, something in the very tie of " my mother's friends," so unknown to her before, that it seemed to bind her tenfold to such an endearing connexion ; so that she returned from Niton Grove, full of nothing but the kindness of " the dear St. Williams'," and on the arrival of Mrs. Grentham, who, to please Lady Catherine, had always professed the warmest affection to Lyna, she, with all the unreserve of an unguarded heart, expatiated upon the charms of Niton Grove, till the subject became so constantly her theme, that it excited something of jealousy in Lady Catherine, which was not lost to the penetration of her guest, who therefore hailed it as an auspicious omen for herself.

One morning, when the letters were, as usual, brought to Lady Catherine, one was directed to Lyna in a handwriting unknown to her ladyship. Suspicion is easily excited in a heart opened by any feeling of jealousy to receive it, and giving the

letter to its owner, she fixed so penetrating a look on her countenance, that it immediately produced a deep blush. For this Lyna could have assigned no cause, for it was one of bashfulness, not of shame; yet the circumstance seemed to corroborate the opinion of Lady Catherine that all was not right, and, thought she, "I am no longer dear to Lyna, else why that confusion and reserve?" She remained, however, quite silent, determined to see how long Lyna would retain the letter without communicating its contents; that day and another passed, yet nothing was said on the subject by either party. Lyna felt sure that Lady Catherine did not speak to her in her usual tone of tenderness, though unconscious of her own share in the mischief; and perfectly at a loss to conjecture the cause of so sudden a coldness, she could only attribute it to some private anxiety, and endeavoured, under this idea, to chase every painful uneasiness from her own mind; yet this very effort threw over her manners and countenance a restraint, which only added tenfold to the flame kindling against her. On the third day another letter arrived, in the same unknown writing, but which caused nothing of her former confusion, and the inquiry from whence the letter came was simply answered, "From

Niton Grove." This indifference was immediately deemed "absolute effrontery," but no further notice was taken of the circumstance. On Lyna's leaving the room, Mrs. Grentham said, "I suppose Lyna frequently corresponds with her new friends; dear girl, she seems so fond of them, it is quite delightful to hear her speak so gratefully of their kindness to her."

"Very delightful, indeed," replied Lady Catherine, with a frown of evident displeasure, "and their correspondence seems equally delightful to her, although I am not favoured with any particulars of the intercourse; but," added she, forcing a cheerful tone of voice, fearful of betraying her real feelings, "it is quite natural, very natural, and Lyna knows that I never wish to interfere with any of her pleasures."

"Oh! I am sure," said Mrs. Grentham, "that she fully appreciates your indulgence, and with regard to the St. Williams', she may safely avail herself of your confidence in her discretion; for they are, I believe, excellent people; indeed, I have heard them called quite an evangelical family."

"Evangelical!" exclaimed Lady Catherine; "surely they are not dissenters?"

"Oh, no!" replied the insinuating Mrs. Gren-

tham, "they belong to the church; though I fancy they are very *liberal* towards all seceders; at least, Lyna told me that she had been with them to a meeting, held for the foreign missionary society, where she heard a most eloquent address in its behalf from the celebrated dissenting minister Dr. Lewis, and that Mr. St. Williams, who was there as its president, subscribed most liberally."

"It is somewhat extraordinary," returned Lady Catherine, "that I have never before heard of this meeting; yet I can scarcely believe that Lyna herself could have gone there, knowing my great objection to everything of the kind: not that I feel any degree of ill-will towards dissenters—no, no, far from it; but it is inconsistent, perfectly so, for church and anti-church to unite; however, it is all very right, very natural, that Lyna should follow the wishes of her new friends; very natural indeed that she should prefer the confidence of younger companions. I am now too old to be the associate, the confidante of youth—but it is very natural."

Lady Catherine could no longer conceal the agitation of her mind, and Mrs. Grentham, hailing it as a moment not to be lost, took care to follow up her insinuations; but pretending not to

see their effects upon her ladyship, she replied, "No doubt, she only went to oblige Mr. St. Williams, or indeed I may have misunderstood her, but if otherwise, I dare say she scarcely thought the circumstance worth mentioning, and probably appears reserved only from the fear of intruding an uninteresting conversation, which she knows the pursuits of giddy youth must prove to those of maturer minds."

"Very natural indeed," replied Lady Catherine; "I am now an old woman, and she cannot enter into my feelings of interest and solicitude in everything where she is concerned; but as you are fortunately a few years younger than myself, perhaps you may be privileged to know who are her correspondents at Niton Grove?"

"Why, really," said Mrs. Grentham, "I do not know of any other than Miss St. Williams, unless indeed it be that young man, who is nephew to Mr. St. Williams, and a sort of relation, I believe, to Lyna; but I have no right to infer that he *corresponds* with her, only I have heard Lyna say she was very fond of her 'poor mother's godson.'"

Lady Catherine was now wounded to the very quick, but, still too uneasy to rest under these anxious suspicions, she hastily entered Lyna's

room, resolved to know the truth. Endeavouring to conceal her anxiety as much as possible, she began some commonplace remarks, till, assuming an air of calm indifference, she said, "Pray may I ask from whom you heard this morning?" Lyna, evidently embarrassed, replied, "It was from Niton," and endeavoured to turn the question, adding, "The St. Williams' talk of going to London shortly."

Lady Catherine, who fixed her countenance steadily on Lyna, and seeing her change colour, could no longer act a calmness so far from her heart, exclaimed, "Prevaricating girl! the St. Williams', I suppose, can have little to do with a correspondence so carefully concealed from your best friend,"—saying which, she hastily left the room, and, tormented by the most painful emotions, she believed there was at once an end to all her high-raised hopes; and instead of the beloved child of her heart, she now only saw in Lyna all that was ungrateful and fatal to her hopes.

In the mean time, poor Lyna almost thought her senses deceived her, but in a few minutes, recollecting what had passed, she said within herself, "And is it then possible that Lady Catherine's late coldness proceeds from my silence respecting these letters? Surely she must, she

ought to have known my heart too well to suppose anything concealed in it concerning myself! and yet I have been to blame in withholding from *her*, who is indeed my 'best friend,' at least the assurance, that although honour prevented my showing her the letters, they related wholly to the affair of another: but I am always doing wrong, thoughtless even of the happiness of those whom I most fondly, most dearly love." She then thought of immediately throwing herself on the indulgence of Lady Catherine, explaining what appeared mysterious, and entreating forgiveness for the rest; but as she knew her ladyship's temper, when once irritated, was not easily subdued to receive any new excitement, she prudently determined to await the evening for all further explanation, and till then to absent herself as much as possible from the presence of Lady Catherine. Gladly did she hail the close of that day, the first she had known of misery since Laylands had been her home; for never had it been so clouded by the displeasure of her whose smiles had hitherto brightened every hour. Trembling, she followed Lady Catherine into her room, as soon as she heard her retire for the night, and falling on her bosom, entreated her to say how she had offended, and to forgive her before she slept, as she

could not bear another day of such displeasure. After much of reproach on one side and of contrition on the other, the subject was at length brought to its point ; but Lady Catherine refusing to hear any justification respecting the letters, only replied, “ I will hear no more about them—I forgive you, Lyna, with all my heart I forgive you, but do not talk to me again of confidence, gratitude, and all such hyperbolical expressions ; I do not require them, and have been unreasonable, very unreasonable, in expecting them from you. You are now of an age to be your own mistress, and it is very natural that you should seek a dearer and more pleasing friendship than that which an old woman can offer ; therefore, Lyna, write to, or hear from, whom you please ; henceforth I promise never to interfere in your correspondence, nor will I again expose myself to deceit, or you to the meanness of deception ; for when you answered me this morning, that you had heard from the St. Williams’, surely that was a most unprovoked, deliberate falsehood ?”

“ Indeed,” said Lyna, really distressed, “ I did not tell you so, for, if you remember, I said the letter came from Niton Grove ; *that* was no untruth, though I confess that even such subterfuge was wrong ; better had it been to have told you

truly the cause of my apparent reserve ; but I now entreat you to read both these unfortunate letters, they will explain my motives for concealment, and to your honour I confide their contents as fearlessly as I rely upon your generous indulgence in acquitting me of any dishonourable intention towards you."

This was said with a look of such earnest entreaty, and in a tone of so much simplicity, that Lady Catherine no longer refused to comply ; she therefore took the letters, saying, " Before I read them, Lyna, tell me how you could be induced to enter into a correspondence with a young man of so recent an acquaintance ?"

" I have entered into no correspondence," replied Lyna ; " Robert Moreton, as a relative and godson of my poor mother, claimed some interest in my feelings : he appeared to me both unfortunate and deserving, and as he reposed confidence in my discretion by relating all the particulars of his situation, which, perhaps, is always flattering to those so trusted, on leaving Niton I assured him of my friendship, if at any time it could be of service to him ; thus was the promise, perhaps, imprudently given, of interesting myself in his behalf, should circumstances ever require it, and honour towards him, not reserve towards your

ladyship, prevented my speaking to you of letters not in any way concerning myself."

Lady Catherine now appeared more satisfied, and opening the letters, she found them exactly corresponding to the story of Lyna; the first was requesting the loan of ten pounds in consequence of difficulties most honourably accounted for; it was throughout expressive of gratitude and esteem, but the language was perfectly delicate, unassuming, and respectful, without one word which the most fastidious could have construed into anything like familiarity. A copy of its reply was folded within, the whole tenor of which was simplicity itself; bearing the most artless solicitude and generous candour, but not a sentence throughout the whole which the relationship of the writer did not fully justify. The last letter, received that morning, was in acknowledgment of Lyna's kindness, returning the ten pounds she had sent, as circumstances had since occurred to render the loan unnecessary, and concluded by a long farewell, the writer being then on the point of leaving England to rejoin his regiment in the Brazils.

Lady Catherine, ashamed of her own hastiness, yet too proud to confess how much of blame rested on herself, returned the letters to Lyna

with her usual smile of fondness, and affectionately embracing her, she exclaimed, " This, my Lyna, has been a chapter of errors, and equal fault rests with us both ; therefore let us mutually forgive, and from this hour you will be dear to me as ever." After some further conversation the subject was dismissed, and happiness seemed for a time perfectly restored, to the no small mortification of Mrs. Grentham.

It is human nature, that when once the heart is opened to the suspicions of jealousy, the object which has excited it, becomes ever after, one of painfully tenacious observation, which is often allowed to overcome the more sober reasonings of good sense, until, alas ! many a sad reality of misery is thus raised from the slightest fabric of imagination ! So it was with Lady Catherine ; she had acknowledged that her over-anxiety where Lyna was concerned sometimes awakened groundless and illiberal fears ; the cloud was dispersed, and Lyna was again restored to her opinion as a being almost faultless ; and for the time, she felt sure that no circumstance could again create mistrust towards one who deserved the confidence of those who loved her. Yet from that period Lady Catherine became so watchful over every word, look, and action of her charge, that each was

constantly subject to misinterpretation. If she became more thoughtful than usual, the change was attributed to restraint ; if more lively, to some happy circumstance which she thought proper to conceal. If she talked too little, she was reserved ; if too much, she was tiresome and indifferent to the comforts of old age, which she might suppose unequal to bear the constant flow of such unrestrained spirits.

In this frame of temper did Lady Catherine constantly expose herself and Lyna to pain and mortification ; and while she constantly endeavoured to secure the happiness of her charge by the most generous sacrifices of self-interest, she frustrated it all, by being too narrowly watchful over her.

It was at this unfortunate period that Lady Catherine and Lyna were invited to pass a fortnight with Mrs. Grentham, who, during their visit, seized every opportunity of obtaining the confidence of Lyna by the most plausible and specious assurances of interest, and often would she observe to her, that her " cheek was less rosy than formerly, or her spirits less buoyant " than they were wont to be ; " tell me then, dear Lyna," she would say, " can care have yet reached that young heart, or anxiety have intruded itself, en-

vious of the happiness which fate would claim you as her own?" Lyna felt grateful for this solicitude, and although she generally concealed every thought of pain for which she only blamed herself, she one day incautiously answered, " You know every situation has its cares, but I am, and ought to be, very happy, for Lady Catherine is always most indulgent to me ; yet sometimes I am tempted to look enviously on those who have parents and parental homes, and then I think, had mine lived, I should have been still happier in sharing their lot, however humble it had been, than as an orphan, surrounded by every comfort, in a still dependent state—but this is very ungrateful ; few orphans are blest with such a benefactress—such a home."

" Certainly, my love," answered Mrs. Grentham, " and few are so idolised even who *have* parents ; but, as you say, dependent situations must always be subject to peculiar trials ; and however dear to us a benefactress may be, there are a thousand feelings which, to a delicate mind like yours, must preclude that union—that interchange of thought, which perhaps can only be enjoyed with those of our own kindred, age, and sentiments ; summer and winter can never well blend."

“ Dear Mrs. Grentham,” replied the unsuspecting girl, “ this is exactly what I have often thought, but yet I was afraid that I was only deceiving myself in supposing it the natural yearning of human nature, when my own heart was more probably warring against its own happiness, by cherishing a discontented, ungrateful spirit : but truly do I often sigh for a mother’s love ; for though dear Lady Catherine is in every sense of the word most kind to me, yet she seems not quite satisfied, not contented with my affection, and often misunderstands me, which sometimes makes me afraid of saying all I wish, and throws a reserve over me which I am sure she may justly censure, though I try to conquer it, because I know how ungrateful it is.”

“ Well, dear Lyna,” said Mrs. Grentham, “ fear not to make a friend of me ; I can enter into all your feelings, for I see their justice, and sincerely pity the misery to which dependence must expose a heart like yours.”

“ Pity me !” exclaimed Lyna ; “ O ! do not misunderstand me ; never, never was an orphan blest with a benefactress so generous, so indulgent, so very, very good—or with a home so replete with blessings ! I only mourn the want of parents, and of kindred ties, not the want of

kindness, or of any comfort in the power of Lady Catherine to bestow."

Lyna spoke from the heart all that was natural for the heart to feel, consistently with that grateful affection with which she desired to accept the blessings of her situation ; but she had spoken enough to furnish grounds for art to "twine her mazy spells" — enough to place power in the hands of Mrs. Grentham, who registered every word she heard, resolved to make them subservient to her own interests. It was not long before an opportunity unexpectedly occurred for this, as Lady Catherine remarked that Lyna certainly was altered, and appeared less robust than usual ; "and yet," added her ladyship, "she assures me that she is well and happy."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Grentham, "the change is evident to every one, but I confess, I think it arises more from malady of mind than health."

"Of *mind* ! do you then think her unhappy ?" exclaimed Lady Catherine, evidently displeased ; for although the suspicion had sometimes crossed her own thoughts, yet she could ill bear it corroborated by another. "So far," added her ladyship, "as the power is mine, I am sure Lyna may have every reasonable wish gratified ; her happiness is my first wish, and, to promote it, I study the very

caprices of youth, that I may conform to them, and if possible, excite the confidence which child to mother, sister to sister, would enjoy to bestow and share : and yet she for whom I do all this, and could willingly make every sacrifice of selfish comfort, denies me the only return I ask—her confidence ; rejects the only boon I desire to see her claim—happiness ! But tell me, Mrs. Grentham,” added she, taking her hand with an expression of the deepest feeling, “ tell me, does she *complain* of unhappiness ? does she wish for anything in my power to give ?”

“ O no ! she does not, I am sure, complain of anything ; at least, I know she endeavours to conquer every feeling of discontent,” said Mrs. Grentham, in a tone as if to appear unwarily led to the insinuation ; then added, with a fascinating smile, “ I make but an awkward apologist, for I know not how it is, I always make things worse, whenever I attempt to reconcile mistakes ; so do not cross-examine me : only rest assured that Lyna feels your kindness, and loves you dearly.”

“ Loves me, Mrs. Grentham ! how does she prove it ? but tell me all you know ; tell me in what arises her discontent : tell me, I entreat you, of what she complains, and I will for ever feel obliged by your candour.”

“ Indeed, dearest Lady Catherine, you take the matter too seriously : however, since you ask it, I will candidly own to you, that I do think her unhappy ; but I am sure her misery arises in herself ; so I told her, and she confessed it must be so.”

“ Then she *has* talked even to you of *misery*,” said Lady Catherine, turning pale ; “ O Lyna ! you who ought—that might be the happiest—to be so ungrateful, so dissatisfied !”

“ I fear, my dear madam,” said Mrs. Grentham, “ that I have been innocently the cause of this agitation, I will therefore be now perfectly unreserved with you. Lyna is a very romantic girl, and often, I believe, allows herself to dwell on retrospections more than half-ideal, which have perhaps excited a distaste for the common realities of life, and made her discontented : but may I trust to your indulgence in not repeating it, if I tell you between ourselves, all that has fallen under my observation ?”

“ You may,” passively replied her ladyship, as if life and death depended on the recital.

“ Well then, as passing Lyna’s room, I have often seen her in tears, and, anxious to discover the cause of this secret distress, I one day ventured to enter and offer consolation, if in my

power ; but she heeded not my entrance, so intently was she engaged over her mother's picture. I could not but revere the feeling excited by so faithful a remembrance of her parent, and stood for some time silently gazing on the interesting scene, till I saw her replace the picture in her desk, which she did, saying, ' Dear mother, had you lived, I should never have known the trials of a dependent situation.' I then approached her, and remonstrated on the sin of indulging ungrateful regrets ; I urged, that though she was an orphan, few orphans had similar blessings. She perfectly acquiesced, and owned herself wrong, promising more self-command for the future. I then asked her if she could possibly feel unhappy, idolised as she was by your ladyship : she only replied, that she loved you very much, but that every situation of dependence was irksome ; and she confessed that she did yearn for younger and dearer ties than your adoption had bestowed on her ; that is, she longed for parents, brothers, and sisters, for she thought no one could supply their place, particularly one so much older than herself, as summer and winter could never unite, and she fears it is thus, you do not understand either her mind or heart ; but still, dear girl, she

is warmly attached to you, and took all the blame to herself. This, I assure you, is all I can with truth assert on the subject ; and whenever I have heard it reported that Lina had not a happy home, I have, you may believe, most warmly contradicted a report so injurious both to your ladyship and Lina."

Lady Catherine for some time remained perfectly silent, pale, and agonised by every word she heard ; at length she replied : " And does even common report say so ? since it has even reached *your* ears, it must indeed be believed, as well founded. Who then but Lina could have given it birth ? Well, be it so : I have been injudicious, I have been presumptuous : I had every blessing which a merciful Providence could bestow—peace, character, wealth, happiness ; yet, not satisfied with these, I sought another in an adopted child, and on her I fondly rested my heart's best affections, with an idolatry which, indeed, ill becomes the shrine of mortal love ! Yes, in her, I falsely thought my declining age would find its joy, its comfort and support ; yet she, that very child, has wounded the heart which so long has cherished her, and has destroyed those fairy visions, which her happiness alone made bright to my too

credulous imagination : but she shall now be free, and may she find a better, a kinder benefactress—and a home more suited to her fancy !”

Mrs. Grentham marked the workings of Lady Catherine’s feelings, and began to think she had gone too far ; “ Indeed, your ladyship thinks too seriously of all this ; Lyna is a romantic, but I believe her to be an affectionate girl, upon whom kindness is not lost.” “ And how does she accept it ?” interrupted her ladyship ; “ by making me appear to the world as cruelly abusing the sacred charge I have undertaken, and herself as the victim of a hard-hearted and rigorous disciplinarian ? This, Mrs. Grentham, is beyond the mere weakness of a romantic imagination. To obtain, I suppose, an interesting commiseration, she has basely and ungratefully sacrificed, not only her own veracity, but my character ! my happiness !”—

“ Your ladyship’s character,” replied Mrs. Grentham, really alarmed, “ can never be impeached even by the breath of calumny. You have too many friends to guard it, too many living proofs of goodness, to fall beneath the power of any false report ; therefore fear not, and be assured Lyna has no wish of intentionally exposing you to blame : but I see that I have done wrong in con-

fiding to your ladyship what perhaps ought to have been carefully concealed : but the tender solicitude which I cannot but entertain (and perhaps too keenly so to admit of the cooler speculations of good sense) for everything which can affect your peace, or light upon a name so honoured, so endeared as yours, may plead my excuse in having thus transgressed the dictates of better judgment : but it was for your sake, Lady Catherine, and for your sake, I shall rejoice to bear all consequences of blame and reproach."

"Do not be afraid, my dear Mrs. Grentham," replied Lady Catherine, affectionately taking her hand ; "believe me, I estimate your friendship too highly to abuse it ; truly do I feel obliged by your unreserved and disinterested confidence, therefore trust me fearlessly, you shall never be implicated in my miseries. Lyna shall know nothing of my feelings towards her till my return to Laylands, nor shall she ever suspect you as being the author of this information ; she must be aware that common report is a ready messenger of evil, and since to this her conduct has exposed me, she must now bear the result ; but never will I betray you, who have thus been so kind a guardian over my name and character."

Lady Catherine left the room, nor did she

again appear till dinner was announced. She was pale and dejected, but evidently strove to disguise her feelings; nor could any one unacquainted with what had passed, have observed that she was affected by any peculiar distress. To Lyna her manners were forced; she addressed herself as little as possible to her, but when she did so, it was always with an attempt at appearing still kind and affectionate; but this could not veil to Lyna's watchful heart the restraint which was thus disguised; yet, now too much accustomed to these changes, she had learnt to bear them in silence, and patiently to endure the anguish they inflicted.

The remainder of the visit, however, passed heavily to all; each acted a part foreign to their feelings. Mrs. Grentham, when unobserved by Lady Catherine, treated Lyna with the utmost affection and confidence, fearful lest she might afterwards suspect her to be the author of Lady Catherine's displeasure. She flattered, caressed, and indulged her, constantly assuring her that Lady Catherine's manner arose merely from the tenacity of old age, or in some measure, perhaps, from the worry to which so large an establishment must occasionally expose her; thus artfully endeavouring to create discontent in Lyna's mind, and to soothe her into the belief of fond commi-

seration. This kindness relieved poor Lyna in some degree from the restraint she must otherwise have endured ; but still, when she heard an early day decided for their return to Laylands, she hailed it—as any change would then perhaps have been—as one that might again restore peace and comfort, both to herself and benefactress. She parted indeed from Mrs. Grentham, as from one who had shared many an hour of heartfelt sorrow ; and when at the last moment Mrs. Grentham assured her of continued affection, and entreated her fearlessly to confide all her anxieties to her, promising consolation and assistance whenever she might stand in need of them, she felt as if she would have given the universe to prolong the comfort of retaining such a friend near her. The entrance of Lady Catherine prevented further conversation, and after affectionately taking leave of Mrs. Grentham, she desired Lyna to get into the carriage, and in a few minutes lost sight of Gloucester.

The first ten miles of their journey were passed in silence by both parties ; after which Lady Catherine talked incessantly on every trifling incident she could think of : the weather, the roads, the places, the people, were themes of endless remark, as if afraid a silent moment would pro-

duce anything like a personal observation. Thus they reached Laylands, and on entering, Lyna, as much fatigued in mind as body, threw herself upon the nearest couch, and exclaimed, "O how thankful I am to be once more at dear, dear Laylands! earnestly do I wish, that I had never seen another place, and that we had never known any one but each other.

"Laylands," replied Lady Catherine, sarcastically, "would feel much flattered, could it be sensible of the honour of your preference; though I presume it would demand a more *consistent* affection," and then adding in a suppressed voice, "Dissembling hypocrite!" she immediately left the room. Shortly after, she sent word to Lyna that she did not intend returning to the drawing-room that night, as, being tired, she wished to remain undisturbed, but begged her doing so might not interfere with Miss Stanhope's intentions for the disposal of her evening. Lyna gladly availed herself of the reprieve thus granted, to retire to her own room, where, shut out from the world, she endeavoured to calm and fortify her mind by seeking that peace and support which can be found only in the grace of God, through Him who is a sure refuge in the hour of our weakness and tribulation!

The next day passed miserably to both parties, for both were acting under the painful restraint of concealed feelings; the one endeavouring to *find* conversation—the other to *avert* it. On the same evening, when each had retired to their rooms, Ellis, the confidential servant of Lady Catherine, brought Lyna a letter from her mistress, saying it was not to be answered that night. Lyna opened it, with a hope that it would lead to some explanation of events, to her so incomprehensible; what then was her surprise on reading the following communication?

“ Common report, which I understand has for some time severely censured my conduct, at length speaks too openly to conceal from me, that it is solely from the specious and melancholy complaints of the ‘ill-treated Miss Stanhope’ that I am held up to the world as abusing the sacred trust which I had undertaken in the care of a young orphan. I therefore beg to assure you that ‘dear Laylands’ need no longer be to you a home, subject to the ‘peculiar trials of a dependent situation,’ and that from this hour you are at liberty to consider yourself released from every irksome obligation of an adopted child; since our mutual comfort, being thus for ever disturbed, can no longer be augmented by the continuance of that forced cheerfulness,

restrained attentions, and the mere *professions* of affection, under which you have so long suffered! It is not in my power to restore to you the parents and parental home over which you so unceasingly lament; but I truly regret that all those endeavours which have, on my part, been so strenuously exerted to supply their place, have so completely failed.

“ I can with truth assert, that my enjoyments have chiefly centred in promoting yours, for which you have been my first and fondest object! yet all this has been ineffectual to secure your happiness, and in the midst of every comfort my fortune could command, I see you spiritless, indifferent, and discontented!—Laylands, instead of being a cherished home, is now become to you only a secondary interest, and I—as a severe guardian, rather than the friend and confidante I have long vainly wished to be. This, Lyna, cannot be flattering to me, anxious as I have been to make it otherwise.

“ Of myself, however, I shall say nothing more—ingratitude and disappointment are but trials common to this life—but mutual happiness can never exist between us, since, on the one hand, suspicion, and, on the other, fear and reserve, must ever militate against all comfort—all enjoy-

ment! I therefore now release you from so hard a fate ; you may go and seek those ties of dearer and younger friends for which you yearn, though Laylands shall still be your home whenever you wish it : but remember, that our interests can no longer be united—and our establishment and pursuits must henceforth be separate.

“ Thus, Lyna, have I been perfectly candid, nor need you attempt to justify a conduct which can admit of no palliation. For the rest—I forgive you, and though you think me unjustly severe and unreasonable, I have been, and still remain,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ C. FOSTER.”

For some time, Lyna held the letter in her hand, scarcely aware whether she could be in her senses ; she perused and re-perused it many times before she could convince herself that she read it rightly, or that the writer of it could be Lady Catherine. At length, rousing herself from the stupor into which its contents had thrown her, she determined to go immediately to her benefactress, and demand who were the authors of such unjust and cruel calumny, as had evidently been invented against her : but feeling herself unequal to encounter the task, she sat down more

prudently to write her reply, assured that she could justify herself from every imputation of ingratitude. This she did, and, with the hope of finding Lady Catherine still up, she took it to Ellis, requesting her to convey it immediately to her mistress ; but it was returned in a few minutes with the following lines written in the envelope :

“ Lady C. Foster begs to return the enclosed to Miss Stanhope unopened, being anxious to avoid all needless discussion, convinced that no explanation can obviate the truth upon which Lady Catherine has acted ; she has therefore only to request that Miss Stanhope may be guided by her own inclinations in pursuing the path most pleasing to herself.”

Lyna now seemed at once thrown upon the world, an orphan indeed ; more than ever at a loss to conjecture what could be the reports which had bereaved her of the only tie that gave her a claim to home and all its blessings. She sat down bewildered as in a dream by such strange, such incomprehensible events ! She thought alternately of all Lady Catherine’s friends, assured that none but an intimate one, could have

influenced her benefactress against her. Could it be the kind-hearted, the generous Mrs. Richards? Oh, no! for her expressions of kindness towards her had borne the very stamp of truth. Could it be Miss Herald? Although she had often appeared jealous of the praise which is often injudiciously bestowed on a favourite, surely she could not be such a hypocrite, as to have raised a tale of calumny against one on whom she had often lavished expressions of admiration. Lyna thought her artful, worldly-minded, but she could not think her so basely wicked—and for what purpose? Could it be Harriet Morley? She was a thoughtless, ill-judging girl, and had often said that she did not envy Lyna's situation, as she would not "live alone with an old woman for the world"—yet she was generous to a fault; and even supposing that in a moment of high spirits she had been led to insinuate anything of the kind to Lady Catherine, she would have known no peace, have spared no efforts, to rectify any misunderstanding, involving the interests of another, which could have arisen from her own heedless levity.

Mrs. Grentham was the last of whom she thought, in the catalogue of intimate friends,—but she would not, could not allow a suspicion to

fall on one, from whom she had received so much kindness ; “ surely Mrs. Grentham would be the last,” thought Lyna, “ to pain Lady Catherine or injure me—to whom then but to her, can I now apply for comfort and advice? What am I to do, or how to act? Lady Catherine will hear nothing from me, but she would believe everything from Mrs. Grentham, and she could plead my cause with truth, for she knows all, and might perhaps relieve us from the misery of these strange mistakes.” With this hope, Lyna would take no rest until she had written all her grievances most unreservedly to Mrs. Grentham, fully confiding in her affection and discretion ; and feeling somewhat relieved by having done so, she sought a refuge from sorrow in the protection of the Almighty, and leaving all coming events to His own will, she slept undisturbed, even in the midst of injury and misfortune.

The next morning Ellis came into her room, bringing her the keys from Lady Catherine, who begged that Lyna would make breakfast, as she purposed taking it in her own room, but, as she was going out for the day, requested Miss Stanhope would amuse herself as she liked best. All this deeply added to the wretchedness of poor Lyna ; she longed to go to Lady Catherine, yet

dreaded that it might prove unavailing, and by intruding at such a moment, perhaps, make things worse ; she therefore resolved to wait until Lady Catherine came down stairs ; but this she did not do till the carriage waited for her, when, on meeting Lyna, she merely returned a cold salutation, and hastily drove from Laylands.

Lyna was often thought an insipid, spiritless girl, but, when roused to act for herself, was sometimes known to do so with decision and courage. Almost broken-hearted by this last repulse, she hastened to her room, and earnestly imploring the guidance of her Heavenly Father, she began seriously to reflect on the means she had best adopt for her future conduct. On going to her desk, once more to re-peruse Lady Catherine's letter, she found on it a packet containing twenty pounds, on which was simply written, " Miss Stanhope's quarterly allowance." This was the first time it had ever been given to her in the form of wages ; and on seeing it thus addressed, pride instantly flushed across her, and gave a firmness which no other feeling could then, perhaps, have done. Rousing from a momentary lethargy, she exclaimed, " No, Lady Catherine ! since I have ceased to be a comfort to you, I will not stay to be a burden ; when you loved me, your generosity

was indeed a source of pleasure as well as of grateful affection, but having lost this, Laylands would be a prison—not a home, and my residence in it, servitude—not happiness. You shall not again be obliged to seek the society of strangers to avoid mine, but shall soon be freed from the presence of one so abhorrent, so distressing to you !” Thus thought Lyna, and giving way to a moment of ungoverned pride, she resolved to quit Laylands before Lady Catherine returned ; but, after a more reasonable deliberation, her better judgment prevailed, and she determined patiently to await Lady Catherine’s return, when she would claim an immediate interview, and if she could then obtain no satisfactory explanation, she would at once decide on leaving Laylands, and would be guided by the advice of Mrs. Grentham, as to what course she should afterwards pursue, waiting only till she could receive an answer from that lady to her last letter. With this resolution she became somewhat more comfortable, and sought employment as the surest resource under present trials, till summoned for the first time to take a solitary dinner. The meal had evidently been ordered more than usually abundant, and having tasted sparingly of a part, she passed the remainder of the evening trembling at every sound,

yet anxiously awaiting the hour on which the fate of her life now seemed to rest.

Lady Catherine at length arrived, and Lyna, summoning all her fortitude, followed her to her room, and closing the door, requested the favour of an hour's conversation. Lady Catherine stood for a moment, as if hesitating whether or no she should grant the demanded interview ; then beckoning Ellis to leave the room, she desired Lyna to sit down, adding that " she was ready to receive her commands."

" Not commands," said Lyna, " but I hope every justification, as, if I fail in exonerating myself from your ladyship's accusations of falsehood and ingratitude, I can no longer wish to remain a burden upon your generosity."

Lady Catherine remained calm and silent, but most firmly implacable ; she listened, as if determined to doubt every word, to misunderstand every look coming from Lyna, and only replied, with the most unbending hauteur, " As you please, Miss Stanhope ; pray follow your own inclinations ; my wishes can be but very secondary considerations." Lyna, finding that all her endeavours to conciliate were thus so perfectly unavailing, merely added, that immediately on receiving a reply from Mrs. Grentham, to whom

she had written on the subject, she would no longer intrude on the bounty of her ladyship. All this did but add to the displeasure of Lady Catherine, and the distress of Lyna; both too proud and too much pained to meet argument patiently and judiciously, each made the misery of the other, by yielding to the impulse of pride rather than to the voice of reason and justice.

Miserably passed the ensuing three days; Lady Catherine and Lyna met only at meals, and then almost in silence. Lyna waited anxiously for her letter, and wondered why it was so long delayed; but she was little experienced in the world, where favour soon flies with prosperity, and, confiding too much in its smiles, she had yet to learn how deceitful they may prove, when tried by the ordeal of adversity. On the fourth day the post came in, yet brought no letter for Lyna; and just as she was debating about writing again, Ellis brought her a packet from Lady Catherine, in which was enclosed the long-expected, long-wished for letter from Mrs. Grentham; and as it will of itself sufficiently account for all the anguish, surprise, and mortification that poor Lyna experienced, we will copy its contents verbatim.

“ I cannot but feel surprised at your having made an application for advice and assistance to one so attached to the interests of Lady Catherine Foster, when you must be aware, how little I can feel inclined to uphold one who, in rebelling against the peace, the happiness, and the character of so generous a benefactress, must lose every claim to my continued kindness. Your letter needs little comment, as it only accords with that species of hypocrisy you have lately thought proper to adopt, for purposes which, however mysterious they seem to be, must be well known to yourself. You say that on my ‘ friendship and indulgence you rely in the present hour of trial ;’ but you forget that both were offered under the belief that you were deserving of them ; but when I find, by undoubted authority, that you have falsely calumniated, by every disgraceful insinuation, the name that ought to have been the most cherished, the most endeared to you, do you suppose that I can longer countenance the serpent, which by such plausible misrepresentation has stung the bosom of her who has so fondly fostered it from infancy till now ? When I heard you lament the miserable restraint to which you were exposed by the tenacious temper of old age, you may remem-

ber how earnestly I endeavoured to check the discontent which I then felt assured arose solely from the weakness of a romantic mind ; and acting upon this belief, although I could not but condemn, I sincerely pitied you, trusting that time, together with the forbearance and continued generosity of your benefactress, might restore you to yourself, and awaken the gratitude which is so justly her due. But now a too well authenticated report has opened my conviction of your real character : from Lady Catherine I have heard nothing ; silently has she long borne the anguish of ill-requited benevolence, for little did I suppose, when at Laylands, the cause of her anxiety was your conduct. Thus, Lyna, have I been candid with you, as henceforth, all intercourse between us must be at an end. I enclose this letter to Lady Catherine, with a request that she may read it previously to her giving it to you, as, after the circumstances which have lately come to my knowledge, I can no longer feel secure in trusting to your veracity.

“ GEORGIANA GRENTHAM.”

This letter was accompanied by the following lines from Lady Catherine :—

“ Lady C. Foster presumes that Miss Stanhope

will now no longer seek to justify herself from 'falsehood and ingratitude,' and therefore begs she will not trouble herself to intrude the subject again on Lady Catherine, but, freed from every restraint, will act entirely as best suits her convenience and inclinations."

Lyna had hitherto endeavoured to receive with patience, the accumulated trials which the last week had produced, under the hope that the light of truth would soon disperse the cloud which had so strangely gathered over her; but this last trial was more than she could bear; and as the conviction now flashed across her of the treachery of one who had professed and appeared to be her kindest friend, she sank exhausted on a chair, and bursting into an agony of tears, exclaimed, "Merciful Saviour! be thou my friend and guide, and forgive the wretched calumniators who would thus drive an orphan from her home." Soon, however, recovering herself, she felt the necessity of immediate exertion. To leave Laylands she was resolved, yet whither could she go? homeless and having few friends, where she could seek a refuge? The St. Williams' were from home; of Mr. Morton she had heard nothing for years, and she knew no one else of whom she could ask a temporary home. Mrs. Warton then arose to her

recollection as her mother's friend ; but the difference of religious opinions between her and Lady Catherine having precluded all intimacy, Lyna felt scarcely privileged to claim her assistance, stranger as she almost was to her. " Yet," thought she, " for my poor mother's sake, she will not, I am sure, refuse to grant me her protection and advice, until I can seek a less dependent situation." She therefore determined to go that evening to Ashfield, and went immediately to seek Lady Catherine, that she might inform her of her intentions ; but she found her ladyship was again gone out, and had left a servant, with a message, that he was at Miss Stanhope's command, in case she might wish to ride. Lyna then returned to her room, and having made the necessary arrangements for quitting, she wrote a few lines to Lady Catherine, bidding her farewell, and promising never again to intrude herself at Laylands, till justice had fully cleared her from every imputation by which she now stood so deeply injured.

This done, she ordered the pony-chaise to convey her to Ashfield, and telling Ellis that she should not return again that night, but would send her word in a day or two respecting the disposal of her trunks, she took a hurried leave, and

bade farewell to a home which for years had been so endeared to her. Arrived at Ashfield, she was received as benevolence ever receives the unfortunate ; and throwing herself on the protection of Mrs. Warton, she simply related all she knew of the circumstances which had compelled her to leave Laylands. Mrs. Warton listened to her tale of sorrow with mingled surprise and compassion ; she read Mrs. Grentham's letter with deep attention, and having known her well in early life, she believed her to be fully capable of any duplicity where her own interests were concerned. She could not wholly justify Lyna from being too hasty and too proud with a benefactress who might certainly have claimed the utmost patience and forbearance ; but in all Lyna's replies to the various questions of Mrs. Warton, there was such an ingenuous simplicity, that she felt assured there was much of injury towards Lyna, and of mistake on the part of Lady Catherine. She therefore bade Lyna be comforted, and under the consciousness of innocence, she might fearlessly rely on the protection of the Almighty, who would not forsake the fatherless in their distress. For the rest, she offered her a home as long as she could feel happy in one so humble. Lyna, who had lately been unaccustomed to the voice of

kindness, felt almost overcome by that of Mrs. Warton. The events and various occupations of the day had prevented her dwelling on melancholy retrospections, or on the sad prospects which were now open before her; but when, alone for the night, she found herself in a strange room and under a strange roof, every remembrance of Lady Catherine—of Laylands, and of all those happy days which she had enjoyed when surrounded by home, by friends, and by kindness—it was then she was awakened to the real sense of her situation; and unable to conquer the feelings of anguish which it produced, she became feverish and ill, and passed such a night of restlessness as almost amounted to delirium. The next morning Mrs. Warton found her really unwell; exhausted both in mind and body, she scarcely seemed to know what she said or did; but the affectionate and kind nursing of the benevolent Mrs. Warton, together with the rest and quietness she enjoyed, soon restored her to herself, and in a few days she was able to leave her room, restored to comparative health, and, though far from being in her usual spirits, she was resigned and cheerful.

We need not detail the mingled feelings of Lady Catherine, on finding that Lyna had really left her. Believing herself to be the victim of in-

gratitude, they were such as must have been excited in every generous breast under similar circumstances ; and it was shortly after that period that Mrs. Warton, accompanied by Herbert, went to Laylands, where we left them at the commencement of this story.

They were ushered into an elegant library, where they found Lady Catherine busily employed in arranging papers, assisted by a lady introduced to them as Miss Herald, whose countenance was not the most prepossessing, and although drest in the light garb of youth, she could ill conceal the ravages of forty years. She was staying at Laylands as comforter to Lady Catherine, being one of those family opiates, who are always at command either to lull or excite the minds of their employers, as circumstances may dictate to be the most politic.

Lady Catherine rose to receive her guests with an ease natural to those long habituated to practise it, but a deep flush crossed her countenance as she guessed what might be the purport of so unusual a visit : it was, however, momentary, and immediately recovering herself, she said, with a haughty smile, " A visit from you, my dear madam, is now so rare a pleasure, that I can scarcely take to myself the compliment it might otherwise imply."

“ I confess it to be one of business more than etiquette or pleasure,” replied Mrs. Warton, “ but I hope the one is not always incompatible with the other; and in applying for the justice of your ladyship, I feel assured that an errand requiring it can scarcely be misunderstood.”

This was at first only answered by a slight inclination of the head; but finding that Mrs. Warton continued silent, evidently to afford an opportunity for Miss Herald to leave the room, Lady Catherine said, “ Whatever your business may be, Mrs. Warton, it need be no secret from my friend Miss Herald; speak unreservedly, therefore, and I hope you will not find me so illiberal or unjust as I have probably been *represented* to you.”

“ I have never heard either illiberality or injustice attached to the name of Lady Catherine Foster,” replied Mrs. Warton; “ I am, however, now here in behalf of Miss Stanhope, who is at present under my protection; and as I believe much of mistake has produced the displeasure of your ladyship against her, I am desirous of knowing upon what foundation she has been accused of ingratitude and calumny? A little explanation may, and I hope will, restore her to your affection

and confidence, in which for so many years she found comfort and happiness."

"Miss Stanhope," replied Lady Catherine, "has herself forfeited both the one and the other, nor can any explanation now exonerate her from the charge which has been but too clearly proved. She, no doubt, has forged upon you a very plausible story, and it would be somewhat difficult to unravel the mystery of her hypocrisy: it is therefore a subject which, I have said, shall not be discussed; yet, in justice to the benevolence which I know actuates you in every cause you undertake, I will hear with patience, and answer with candour, any question you may wish to ask; but remember, Mrs. Warton, it must be the last time her name is ever mentioned between us. I have said, and I repeat it," added her ladyship, raising her voice, "that henceforth, whoever mentions it again in my presence, will incur my utmost displeasure."

"So let it be," replied Mrs. Warton, "and I only regret that I am even now compelled to intrude a theme so painful to your ladyship." She then continued to state most impartially all that appeared to favour the cause of *Lyna*, without attaching anything like blame to Lady Catherine; but her ladyship would hear nothing in vindica-

tion of her conduct, for believing Mrs. Grentham's letter to be an unanswerable evidence of her guilt, every argument against it only strengthened her conviction of Lyna's duplicity; so that, after long and patient argument, Mrs. Warton took her leave, finding all her efforts to reconcile the parties unavailing. She had, however, heard enough to feel satisfied that Lyna was more "sinued against than sinning;"—that Lady Catherine was truly to be pitied, as having been deceived into a belief of injury, and that the mischief might clearly be traced to the treachery of the insinuating Mrs. Grentham. She therefore returned home, satisfied that she might safely continue Lyna's friend, and convinced that, in God's good time, innocence would at last prevail even in the sight of man.

Lady Catherine, ever since the departure of Miss Stanhope, appeared to the world in unusually good spirits; but Ellis has said, that more than once, she found her mistress in the room which was Lyna's, leaning mournfully on the unstrung harp, to which, but a few months before, she had listened with such fond delight;—but she who excited it could never again awaken that harmony, which her very ingratitude had disturbed, and the heart which so long and so dearly had cherished

it, was left like that harp—neglected by the very hand whose touch so often had soothed the hours of sickness and of pain! But the trial was over, and the past remained only as a dream, from which she was awakened by the sad remembrances of ill-requited affection.

Lyna was not long in meeting the sympathy of Mr. St. Williams and his family, whose kindness to her increased tenfold under the trials which rendered it the more essential and valuable. She received a most cordial invitation from them, with an assurance that however others might condemn, the voice of a multitude could never influence them against her. They also mentioned their wish of having a governess for the two younger girls, and as they understood that Lyna wished for such a situation, they offered it to her in so delicate and generous a manner, that it was left entirely to her own feelings, either to take or to reject it, without any possible charge of inconsistency. This she most gladly accepted, and leaving Mrs. Warton with a heavy heart, full of gratitude for the maternal kindness she had received from her, she entered a new life of care and anxiety, to which hitherto she had been a stranger. But the St. Williams' were not those who considered a governess only as a dependent,

forming a part of their establishment ; they regarded her as one who shared the most arduous of a parent's care ; as a friend, to whom their dearest interests were consigned ; and grateful to her for the improvements of the children, they not only endeavoured, by every delicate attention, to mitigate the anxious task which devolved upon her, but by every kindness to subdue the remembrance that she was not, like them, blest with family and home.

Thus released from the charge of Llyn, Mrs. Warton declared herself at liberty to accompany Herbert and his sister to Llanvair, whenever they would fix a time for their journey. This was heard with equal pleasure by all parties. Louis was accordingly sent for, and Ellen hastened the preparations with all the zeal of one delighted at the prospect of novelty. Leaving Caroline Herbert was the only drawback to the anticipated pleasure now before her ; but she gave a faithful promise of writing " very often," while Caroline, on the other hand, urged her to think often of Durnford, and, above all, not to become a methodist ; though she scarcely saw how she could escape, for she had heard that Llanvair was a very " tabernacle of psalm-singing and perfection," and that Miss Aubrey, Lady Warton's chosen saint, was now staying there.

This sounded rather appalling to poor Ellen, but she remembered Mrs. Warton, and thought that religion could not, after all, be so very gloomy. "However," said she, in answer to Caroline's charge, "you know I need not sing psalms with them if I do not like it, and when tired of Llanvair, I can but come home again." With this the friends affectionately parted, and Mrs. Warton, together with her young party, left their homes early on a bright May morning.

INFLUENCE.

CHAPTER V.

TWILIGHT had scarcely mellowed the last bright tints of an evening sun, when the glen of Calwan first opened to the view of our travellers, and Llanvair appeared behind it, shaded but not concealed by the light mists which hung above its cultivated and romantic valleys. "Here," exclaimed Herbert, as they entered St. Llenards, "rest peace and happiness; for these humble dwellings are enriched by contentment, and simplicity in the love of God, is the only law which governs the principles of these unsophisticated peasants." These eulogiums on the people of St. Llenards would probably have been considerably enlarged, had not a light issuing from the window of the Priory attracted a general exclamation; for it had evidently been placed there to show that the tenants of the place were not indif-

ferent to the arrival of their friends ; and as they passed it, Mr. Seymour and Fanny were seen waving a handkerchief in token of a cordial welcome ; but soon all again disappeared. Llanvair Hall was thrown open to hail its guests, and in a few moments they were received by Lady Warton with that friendly hospitality which a generous heart enjoys to bestow. The enthusiasm of Herbert's disposition, which was so seldom excited, now animated his every look and word, while Ellen, scarcely less delighted, found something to say in everything she saw.

Lady Warton took her guests up stairs, knowing the discomforts of a travelling dress ; and scarcely had Ellen finished changing hers, when she heard a voice never to be forgotten by her affectionate heart, and running forward, in one moment was received on the bosom of her fond and faithful nurse. Lady Warton shared their pleasure in witnessing the happy meeting, while poor old Johnson sobbed, and smiled, and kissed her child by turns, saying, as she eyed her from head to foot a dozen times, " Well to be sure, how babies do spring up in a few years ; why, my lady, I can't hardly believe that this is my own dear child, that I nursed from her very birth ! Well, thank God, I have lived to see her once

more—but where's Master Herbert? I must see him, I must indeed, for I can't go away without seeing both my children."

"Here he is," exclaimed Herbert, coming behind her, "almost jealous that he is only second in your thoughts."

She turned round, as if startled by the voice, but there was less of joy than pain expressed by her steady gaze. She took his offered hand, and pressing it between both her own, could only say, with a trembling inarticulate voice, "I thought, to be sure, it was my poor master! for never did a son so favour his father!" and then sinking on a chair she burst into tears, while each seemed to catch the sadness of her own remembrances. Lady Warton allowed her a few minutes of indulgence, and then taking her hand said, "Come, Johnson, we must not give our friends such a sad meeting, or we shall frighten them away again."

"No, no, I must not indeed," replied Johnson, wiping her eyes, "I won't, my lady; I'll go home now, and thank ye kindly for letting me come." She then arose, and again taking Herbert's hand, she added, without venturing to look at him, "Well, God bless you, Master Herbert; I am glad to see ye both, that I am, for I loved ye as though you were my own, but you are so like my

poor master that I could not"—the sentence died upon her lips, and, without another look or word, she went down stairs as hastily as her unsteady steps would permit. This scene had somewhat sobered the spirits of the young people; to Herbert, his father's name always bore a melancholy charm, but never had it been so excited as by the faithful remembrance of his old servant. Mrs. Warton here joined them, but as she seemed so much fatigued, they all persuaded her to go to bed; to this she made no objection, and retired at once to her own room, followed by Lady Warton, who in a few minutes, however, returned to accompany her young guests to the party awaiting their return.

On entering the drawing-room, she took Ellen by the hand, and introducing her to Miss Aubrey, said, "I hope, my dear Ellen, you will soon learn to know and love this friend of mine, for I anticipate, as a real gratification to myself, your being drawn together, and she is, I assure you, no stranger to your name."

Ellen blushed as Miss Aubrey took her hand with one of the sweetest smiles that she had ever seen. Could that be the puritanical, stiff, rigid Miss Aubrey, of, or rather against whom, she had heard so much from the Herberts? Could it

be the same, who had been represented to her as being too sanctified to enjoy any of the innocent recreations of society?—and who deemed it a crime either to smile, to sing, to dance, or to play? — for she, of whom she had heard all this, now stood before her, a young and elegant woman, whose dress was neither sackcloth nor brown drugget, but made according to the fashion of the day, in the simplest, neatest form. Her features indeed bore no striking marks of beauty, but there was an irresistible sweetness in her manners, together with a countenance of such bright intelligence, that she immediately excited something beyond admiration—it was respect, interest, and esteem.

On Ellen's first entrance, Miss Aubrey was seated on a stool at the upper end of the room, with one little girl upon her lap, and another somewhat older leaning upon her shoulder, listening most intently to something she was reciting. She arose on perceiving Lady Warton and Ellen, but the children still clinging to her, she kissed them, and as she came forward, Ellen heard her promise that she would finish the story "to-morrow evening."

Much of cheerful conversation followed the introduction of the strangers, till after tea, when Mr.

Seymour being announced, Herbert and Ellen ran forward to give him the earliest greeting ; he took a hand of each, and looking at them alternately, declared they made him feel quite an old man. " As to you, my dear Herbert," said he, " at twelve years old, I proudly called you my boy, but I think at twenty, I must call you brother, otherwise I shall fancy that my black hair is long in turning white."

Ellen here interrupted him by asking for Fanny. He replied, that she was very anxious to accompany him, but having a cold, he had insisted on her remaining at home till the next morning, when she would make Ellen an early visit.

" No, no," said Herbert, " this is not the land of formality and etiquette, and therefore we will all go to her, as soon as Lady Warton will set us at liberty, for I long to see the Priory, the trees I planted there, and the little grotto, which, in ' days of yore,' I thought a fine specimen of my own architecture."

" Not forgetting the painted window," returned Mr. Seymour, " which still remains a specimen of your early mischief; but," added he, looking at Louis, " your head is so full of days ' lang syne,' that you have not introduced me to your

friend ; and I have promised Fanny to persuade you all to dine with us to-morrow."

To this Lady Warton would not consent, but proposed their going in the morning to fetch Fanny to spend the day at the Hall : this being accordingly settled, Mr. Seymour took his leave. The rest of the party were soon afterwards summoned by the prayer-bell to evening worship ; every member of the household assembled as one little flock, to render the sacrifice of thanksgiving to Him who had mercifully brought them to the close of another day. Lady Warton read the service with that serious devotion, which must ever arrest the attention, if not impress the mind of the hearers, with a sense of the important duty in which they were engaged. This was concluded by the evening hymn, accompanied by Miss Aubrey on the organ ; and as Ellen listened to the " solemn song of praise," she thought that never had she felt less of gloom or more energy of soul. Each then retired for the night, and as Herbert gave his sister her candle, he said, " Well, Ellen, there is nothing so very tedious or melancholy in an hour devoted to prayer and praise, is there ?"

" No," replied Ellen, " I never felt less melancholy in my life ; however, say what you will, brother, the *world* would, notwithstanding, call us a set of methodists."

“ In the ‘ *world without souls* ’ that might be the case,” said Herbert smiling ; “ but here, Ellen, as at St. Foy, we may live as beings accountable for a greater purpose than to follow the mere fashions of a day, as if this life were to end an existence, for which the Christian looks beyond the grave as an everlasting portion.”

Ellen, who had both sense and feeling, knew this to be a truth ; but having confidently assured Caroline Herbert that she would never enter into the spirit of “ over-righteousness,” she was now ashamed to confess the superiority of happiness, enjoyed by such a family as Lady Warton’s, though she felt an inward conviction that a life of holiness, is alone a life of peace. The next morning she arose full of anxious curiosity to see Fanny Seymour, who six years before, had been the fondest associate of her childhood. Ellen had not been tutored in a fashionable school-room, without learning the full value attached to a fine figure, elegant manners, and superficial accomplishments ; and a feeling of vanity came across her, when she thought of the difference of her own education, and that of a country parson’s daughter. She, consequently, expected to see in Fanny an awkward illiterate girl, who had no taste beyond that of a pretty flower garden, and a neat

farmyard ; and no mind for any enjoyment but that of teaching a few chubby children A, B, C, without a thought beyond the village of Llanvair, and without a wish beyond that of going to heaven. With this she sighed at the perspective now before her, of passing six long months, associated with companions and pursuits, so opposite to those of the last five years. Fanny's letters indeed had all been expressive of a cultivated understanding and a feeling heart, but Caroline had always condemned them as completely those of a country vicar's daughter, " who generally learns the knack of writing well," because accustomed to the *petty duties* of village accounts, copying sermons, and similar occupations. Ellen, therefore, looked forward to a renewal of intimacy with Fanny, with something of doubtful foreboding, pleased only in the idea of witnessing her astonishment at her own superior attainments, and in the hope of making Louis at last confess, that there is a charm in something beyond simplicity. With these thoughts passing in her mind, she bestowed more than usual pains in the choice of her dress ; a circumstance not lost to the penetration of Herbert, who forbore noticing it, that she might be left to her own discretion.

Immediately after breakfast the young people

went, according to appointment, to visit St. Llenards. Both Mr. Seymour and Fanny were absent, but had left word that they would soon return, if the gentlemen and Miss Irwyn would in the meantime amuse themselves either with books or music. Ellen thought that Caroline would not have done so, but "*she* had a warm heart." They were, however, ushered into a small drawing-room, where everything was arranged with elegant simplicity ; several paintings, both in oils and water-colours, ornamented the walls, baskets of fresh flowers were dispersed on little tables, and a neat piano completed the comforts of the room. The paintings attracted Herbert's attention, but what was his surprise on seeing them bear the initials F. S. " Surely," said he, " Fanny cannot be the artist of these ?"

" Oh ! no," replied Ellen, " I do not think that she can either sketch, paint, or play ; and yet," added she, looking at a stand of music, " here are Handel's oratorios, and several vocal pieces ; but who can have taught her to sing ?"

The entrance of Fanny prevented further remark : she ran in with that artless delight, which is not to be checked by the presence even of a stranger, and affectionately embracing Ellen, and giving her hand to Herbert, she, with tears of joy

sparkling in her bright blue eyes, assured them how sincerely she hailed their return to their native country, and a renewal of those happy days which in childhood they had so often shared together. Ellen, who had anticipated so different a reception, was touched by the affectionate remembrance of her friend, and, ashamed of the injustice she had done her, exclaimed, as pressing her hand, "Oh! that I had never left you, Fauny."

Herbert witnessed the impression thus made on his sister, with silent gratitude; it was what he had both expected and wished, and he hailed it as a promise of future improvement. Fanny apologised for her apparent indifference to them, in being absent on their arrival, saying that she had called to visit a poor child suddenly seized with convulsions, and pleasure had necessarily given place to duty.

Herbert then remarked the growth and altered appearance of each since they last parted, and said that he supposed Fanny could scarcely remember anything about him. "Indeed, Herbert," said she, with unaffected simplicity, "I remember everything about you, though truly, you are somewhat altered, since you used to be my playfellow and helpmate in all difficulties; but your countenance

is what it was, and your heart, I am sure, is not changed, therefore why should you suspect mine to be so? But here comes my dear father," added she, looking at the window from whence she saw him; "and he amongst us again, Herbert, we shall almost forget that we have not our evening lessons to repeat, of 'Who was the founder of the Persian empire?' 'Why was Moses prevented reaching the happy Canaan?'"

Mr. Seymour now joined them, and entered into their retrospective visions, with as much pleasure as if he had been equally a sharer in them. "Don't you remember?" was a sentence echoed a thousand times from one to the other, till the very past almost seemed to live again in the present. Mr. Seymour then proposed showing them the improvements in the garden, and Herbert exclaimed, "To the grotto—I must see the grotto." Fauny blushed as she said, "You will find it somewhat metamorphosed since it was our banqueting-room, where Ellen and I have prepared many a feast of raspberries and milk against the return of our young mountaineer."

"Into what, shall we now find it metamorphosed?" asked Herbert; "I hope all my fine shell-work is not quite annihilated, or have you converted it into a Minerva's temple, which we

once talked of, and placed the heads of Socrates and Newton to guard the entrance, as emblems of patience and perseverance ?”

“ Oh ! no, indeed,” replied Fanny, “ nothing so classical, I assure you ; it is a very hiding-place of litter, and only filled with oils and paints of every colour and description.”

“ It will tell tales, however, and perhaps inform us who is the artist of these drawings,” said Herbert, pointing to the wall, “ whose name has been a riddle to us.”

“ It is a very simple one,” replied Fanny, “ to puzzle so wise a head ; but come, I long to show you a thousand things, which I am sure you will recognise as old friends.” So saying, she again put on her bonnet, and, taking Ellen’s hand, led the way towards the grotto ; Mr. Scymour detaining Louis as his companion, anxious to show him a favourite mount, from which, he said, was a view that had often been compared to a miniature resemblance of Switzerland.

Thus was each delighted, in the different associations which the day excited, and they returned to Llanvair, after a long morning’s absence, happy in each other, and pleased with everything about them ; while Herbert was not a little proud of displaying to Louis the comforts of his native

peasantry, and the advantages which the parish enjoyed in having such a pastor as Mr. Seymour.

“ But according to your statement,” said Louis, “ this is one of the few portions of the earth privileged to retain something of primitive innocence ; consequently Mr. Seymour can have found little sin to wash away.”

“ I beg your pardon,” answered Herbert ; “ I have heard my poor father and Lady Warton say, that previously to Mr. Seymour's settling here, the poor people were left in total ignorance by his predecessor, a most careless, indolent man.— But the girls are calling us. What have they found for us to see ?” So saying, the young men left their moralising and St. Llenard's hill.

Mr. Seymour was indeed all that Herbert had so proudly described him. He was one who, under the advantages of a most excellent and pious tutor, had early imbibed the strictest principles of the only orthodox doctrine, as it is taught in the gospel of our Saviour ; and, in taking upon himself the awfully responsible office of a minister, he felt that it was a charge requiring much self-denial, much trust on Divine assistance, and a constant vigilance over his own heart, that he might lead the little flock over whom he was appointed shep-

herd, not only by preaching their duties, but by the influence of his own example.

The living of Llanvair had fallen to his charge, upon the death of its former incumbent, a man possessed of some independent property, and who chose to reside upon his own estate, some miles distant from the parish of his appointed labours ; he could, therefore, devote but little time to his parishioners, nor cultivate that constant intercourse with the poorer class of his congregation, so essentially necessary, in establishing the confidence and affection which should ever exist between minister and people. So that, when Mr. Seymour first entered upon his duties at Llanvair, he found many existing evils to remove, especially in gradually drawing to the church again, many who had left the worship of their forefathers, and formed an independent sect for themselves, upon the plea that they were driven to it by the steadfast refusal of their rector, to their earnest appeal for two services on the Sabbath, and a monthly administration of the Holy Sacrament. Under such circumstances, the appointment of Mr. Seymour was hailed by all classes as an event likely to restore peace and union, to a people distracted by the divisions of party feeling, and who began seriously to suffer the conse-

quences arising from schism and dissent. Nor were they disappointed. Opposed to a residence beyond the limits of his parish, Mr. Seymour at once decided upon taking the dilapidated Priory of St. Llenards, however unpromising it looked of comfort, and which, repaired at his own cost for his reception, looked ever afterwards the respectable residence of a respectable clergyman. The seceders were soon won back to the bosom of the established church, which, morning and evening of each Sabbath day, echoed the fervent adorations of a crowded congregation; while the monthly communion, and weekly services, were all received as blessings beyond the things of time; and thus fed from the "Bread of Heaven," and taught the word of God, "line upon line, precept upon precept,"—by one who adorned the doctrine he professed, by his own irreproachable conduct, both morally as a man, and spiritually as a minister of Christ,—the unsophisticated villagers rendered to their pastor, the willing duty, and reverential affection, which gratefully requited his indefatigable efforts to promote the best interests of his simple-hearted people. Under these advantages, little seemed wanting to complete the happiness of Llanvair, where there were few not satisfied with their own lot, thankful for

the mercies they enjoyed, or patient when such mercies were darkened by a passing cloud : for, the *blessing of God* sanctified their religion, and *His peace* was “ shed abroad ” in the hearts of the poor ; a peace, which earthly pleasures cannot give—peace, which earthly tribulations can never take away.

Such, then, was the school in which Fanny had been reared. She was the first and dearest in her father's heart ; yet solicitous for her eternal welfare, he had not lavished upon her any of those superfluous indulgences, too often bestowed upon an only child. Her education had been a source of amusement and delight to him in those hours which, in so secluded a village, might otherwise have been lonesome and tedious. He had himself received a liberal education ; and, possessed of great talents, he was quite competent to instruct his daughter in the more essential attainments of a cultivated mind. He knew that in all probability her life would be passed in retirement, and therefore endeavoured to store her mind with such information as might always furnish her with resources against indolence or ennui. Music she had learnt as a recreation, to occupy those leisure hours which nothing more essential might claim. In painting she had early evinced so much

genius, that her father had permitted her to bestow more time on its cultivation than he otherwise would have done ; and though she never had received any other than his own instructions, she had taken many views about Llanvair, which would have done credit to a more professed artist. Yet there was nothing striking in her talents ; she was more well-informed than accomplished, more steady than brilliant. Inheriting all the sweetness of her mother's mild and benevolent disposition, she was universally beloved, and was now not only the solace of her father's life, but the companion and sharer of his pursuits, his cares, and his enjoyments. Ellen, who had expected to meet so different a girl in Fanny Seymour, was not a little astonished, as every hour developed some new charm, which diffidence at first concealed ; but, humbled in herself, she only now felt how illiberal she had been in forming the estimate of a " country girl."

The young people were now thrown constantly together : day after day, some new excursion was arranged for a ramble among the mountains : nor was Berwyns forgotten, but as the family to whom it belonged was seldom there, it looked a melancholy picture to those who had known it more cheerfully tenanted ; so that they only once ven-

tured to visit it, as if it had been the grave of some departed friend !

Miss Aubrey, who had been previously prepossessed in Ellen's favour by Lady Warton, and found upon more intimate acquaintance, how much might, under God's blessing, be done with a disposition evidently amiable, now anxiously seized every opportunity to interest her in those christian duties, which the world had taught her rather to ridicule than cherish. This she endeavoured to do by gentle and affectionate admonition ; and Ellen, who was always grateful for any solicitude towards her, soon learnt to look on Miss Aubrey as her " best friend." To gain the influence she desired to obtain over Ellen, she had studied her pursuits, that, bending in some degree to share them with her, she might, unperceived, gradually raise her to those of higher standard. For this she played and sang duetts with her, and became herself, a pupil in learning Ellen's favourite style of drawing in chalks. In return, Ellen promised to study the Scriptures for an hour every day, to visit the poor people with her, and assist in cutting out clothes for their use. At first she found this a very irksome, uninteresting task ; the poor people " were dirty," and their rooms so close that it made her head ache to sit in them ;

or the "wood-smoke would make her pelisse smell like a charity-school for a month afterwards;" yet Miss Aubrey never appeared to notice these remarks, but only endeavoured the more earnestly to render the duty pleasing, by relating anecdotes of the different cottagers to amuse and interest the mind of Ellen. Nor was Fanny less anxious to promote the better principles of her friend; she introduced her to the Infant, and other schools; led her through the district of poor people, more especially under the superintendence of Miss Aubrey, and expatiated feelingly upon the success of her dear father's ministrations.

"Oh! how I wish," said Ellen one morning, when Fanny was thus displaying the glories of her native village, "that Caroline Herbert would establish a school in our parish; how gladly would I help her in the management of it."

"No doubt she would do so," replied Fanny, "if she but knew the benefits attached to it; therefore, when you return, cannot you propose it, and take the first trouble of it upon yourself?"

"O no," said Ellen, with a sigh, "we have no time at Lymington for teaching others, we have so much to learn ourselves. Here, Fanny, you *can* do your duty, for every one encourages

you in it, and then you have no governess to make you practise the piano three hours every day, and the harp, and Italian, and waltzing,—all these are useless here, but at Durnford I believe they are thought the most essential things of life.”

“ Oh ! Ellen, and can such a life be thought a happy one by any rational being, who has higher interests at stake, than any so fleeting, so valueless, and too often so criminal ? ”

“ No, indeed,” replied Ellen mournfully ; “ I often think it anything but happy ; and yet in the world, we must be guided by its customs. Here, you may be peaceful and contented, for you have only to follow the path of duty ; but indeed, Fanny, in England, duty is a difficult thing to perform ; its very name would almost expel you from fashionable society, and if, like you, we were *there*, seen teaching poor children to sing psalms, we should be laughed at as methodists, and be so scrutinised, that every little fault we committed, or every sigh we uttered for the next twelve-month, would be imputed to the *crime* of ‘ over-righteousness.’ ”

“ How then,” asked Fanny, “ can dear Mrs. Warton live as a blessing to her little village, in the strict fulfilment of her duty, with impunity ? ”

“ Oh ! because she is old, and may therefore do as she likes—besides, she is a “ dissenter.”

“ And truly, Ellen, may she feel happy, who, in a world such as you represent, can, for conscience’ sake, bear the reproach which falls on a Christian’s name ; tenfold then shall be her reward ! and oh ! how thankful ought *I* to be, who am placed in a sphere of so little temptation, where as you truly say, duty lies only as a flower in my path, and yet how aggravated is the sin of leaving one command neglected, where I can have nothing to prevent the fulfilment of them all. Ellen, let me entreat you, as you love your eternal welfare, now to accept the privileges granted you, and, while you are here, endeavour to cultivate such habits of principle, that when you return, life shall seem joyless to you without such resources. Miss Aubrey loves you, Ellen, and from her, you may learn everything that is good.”

“ How can Miss Aubrey love me,” said Ellen, “ for I am sure I am very unlike her ?”

“ Because she knows, dear Ellen, you have the *desire* of being all that she is anxious to see you ; and with a little more moral courage to resist the evil influence of an evil world, together with a firm reliance on a strength *not your own*, you will be blest with success in all your better resolutions.”

“ But even here,” said Ellen, “ I am an idle person, and if I had the care of any of the poor people, I could do no good ; for I should not know what to say to them, and they would not mind me, for I can have no influence over them.”

“ You shall have a district to-morrow,” said Fanny, after a moment’s thought, “ and do not say you can have no influence ; *that*, is in the hands of every human being, though, I believe, no gift is so neglected and abused. But now, Ellen, you can really serve me essentially, for at some distance hence is a poor girl who is a dreadful sufferer ; she is in a decline, and needs all the support we can administer, for, her mother having a large family, she has few comforts around her ; and yet she is truly an example of patience ; henceforth she shall be *your* charge, and to-morrow you shall go with me, and I will give you that, and two other cottages adjoining, as a little district ; only remember, it is a responsible office,” added Fanny smiling ; “ for if neglected, the blame will all fall on my poor shoulders in choosing so bad an agent.”

This seemed greatly to delight Ellen, who promised to do her best ; “ Only,” said she, “ don’t tell Miss Aubrey, and then I will, some of these

days, give her an agreeable surprise, and take her to see *my* invalid and *my* little district."

She then followed Fanny to the Priory, to receive further instructions, impatient to be invested with the full power of her agency. Fanny took her to a little store-room, neatly arranged with jars and canisters, bearing tickets of arrow-root, sago, rice, tea, and other articles of comfort. "This," said she, "is entirely for the poor people : I must give you a book for your district, and when any man, woman, or child in your charge, falls sick, you must inquire what they want, and according to the directions of the doctor, who is seldom any other than Johnson, you must give what they demand, and insert it in your book. This enables us to keep clear accounts, and to know exactly the expenses of the sick. On Johnson devolves the care of the medicines, which are regulated in the same manner. And here," added Fanny, taking a small book from the shelf, "is a collection of prayers for the sick ; for, in administering to your poor sufferers temporal alleviations, you must not fail to close your visit by reading one of these, which you must choose according to circumstances ; for we can do little of ourselves, without the attendant blessing of God, and both

the giver and receiver of benefits must be taught to know to whom alone the praise is due."

Ellen thought this was rather a formidable part of the task, but she felt the truth of Fanny's argument, and therefore determined to do her duty. She then inquired by whom these expenses were defrayed. Fanny told her that she received many liberal subscriptions, for different charities, from the neighbouring families; "and these," said she, "generally supply our demands; but whenever a season of peculiar sickness occurs, which, I am thankful to say, is seldom the case, I always find a purse in grandmamma's pocket to make up all deficiencies." Ellen now took her leave, and returned to the hall, full of animation and pleasure, at the thoughts of being at last of some use to others, and invested with so important and profitable an office. Herbert remarked her smiling, rosy countenance as she entered the drawing-room; and Louis added that he supposed a letter from Caroline had excited such a glow of pleasure.

"For once, Louis, you are widely mistaken; it is simply the pure atmosphere of Llanvair which makes me feel and look so happy," replied Ellen, conscious of now tasting that peace of mind which attends the wish of doing well; and, thought she,

“ if Louis did but know why my heart is light, he would not sigh and look so grave.”

The next morning, at the usual hour, Miss Aubrey tuned her harp, to give Ellen her accustomed lesson, but was surprised on finding it declined on the plea of being too busy, having an appointment with Fanny. Miss Aubrey then said that she would accompany her, but Ellen, with a look of great importance, answered, “ O no, indeed you must not, for I am on a secret embassy, which will admit of no witnesses, and therefore farewell till dinner-time.” So saying, she was about to leave the room, when Miss Aubrey, who, as Fanny was in the secret, guessed the errand was a good one, retained the hand of Ellen a moment in her own, and said, “ God be with you”—but it was said in the tone of such affectionate solicitude, that the words sank deep into Ellen’s susceptible heart, tears filled her eyes, and as she closed the door, she thought “ how easy, how delightful is duty ! I am determined always to do what is right !”—Alas, it was this very security in herself, which, at the moment of reaching the entrance of her goal, drove her from its threshold, and left her again to her own weakness, on which she always too fearlessly, too confidently relied ; for Christianity is not a theory that we can take

or leave at will, as circumstances shall make it convenient for us : it is a flower which can bear no transplanting, it can feed only on one soil,—gradual is its growth,—and, slow to bud, its blossom is everlasting !—Nor can principle,—the beacon which guards our frail barks from the quicksands of the world,—be raised at our command, as a mere bauble to amuse and please the eye : its light must be constant and steady, and the darker our night, so must it emit a brighter flame !—But Ellen thought that she was *religious*, because she felt happy in doing well, and she fancied that *principle* now actuated her conduct, because she so willingly left her favourite harp, to meet the novelty of visiting a poor girl ! Ellen believed all this—yet she was not deceitful—she was self-deceived !

Fanny now, being prepared with a basket of provisions and some tracts, led Ellen to St. Llenard's hill, on the descent of which stood three small old cottages. Fanny, gently tapping at the door of one, entered, and inquired of a respectable looking woman, who was washing, how Susan was.

“ Thank ye, miss, she is no better at all ; but will ye please to walk up ? ” said the poor woman, tears filling her eyes, which she endeavoured to

conceal by wiping a broken chair for Ellen to sit down.

“ We will both go up,” replied Fanny, “ if you do not think we shall be too much for Susan ; Miss Irwyn is come to see her, as she wishes to visit her very often : perhaps you may remember her, Betty, the young lady who used to live at Berwyns ? ”

“ What, Squire Irwyn’s young lady ? ay, that I do, though to be sure she’s grown out of knowledge ; but I am glad to see you, miss,” said she, turning to Ellen, “ and I’m sure Susan will, for the first bit of work she ever did to be proud of, was a shift for ‘ little miss ; ’—ay, I wish my poor master was alive and at Berwyns now ; but God’ will be done.” So saying, she opened a door leading to a dark staircase, and pointing up, added, “ Do ye walk up, miss, and thank ye kindly for coming.”

Fanny led the way, well accustomed to the “ rugged flight,” but Ellen only scrambled after her, and thought it was “ very close.”

They entered the little dark room, which was as neatly arranged as the circumstances of its owners would admit ; on a low bed was a young woman, evidently in the last stage of a decline,

supported only by a pillow and a truss of straw behind it. She endeavoured to raise herself as Fanny approached her, but was prevented by a deep cough. Ellen shrank back as if frightened, for she had never seen such a spectacle before ; but Fanny, with a cheerful voice, bade her sit down on the little stool near the window, and then turning to the poor sufferer, said, " I am afraid, Susan, you are not much better since I saw you on Monday."

" No, miss," replied the girl, " I think I get weaker every day ; but I thank God, I don't suffer more pain than I did."

" Can you sleep better at night?"

" O no, miss, I am worse at nights, my cough is so bad : but I shouldn't mind it, if it didn't wake mother so, for you see, miss, four of us are obliged to sleep in this room, and I can't help coughing."

" Your mother only feels for you, Susan, I am sure," replied Fanny ; " but have you no one to sit up, now you are so ill—your sisters could take it by turns surely?"

" I know they would, miss, for everybody is good to me, but it would make me feel worse if I kept any one from her bed. To be sure, when they are all asleep, I think the time hangs very

heavy ; but then I say those nice hymns you taught me, and I think how good God is to me, for I know he hears and comforts me, when ‘ I cry in the night season.’ ”

“ And what a blessing, Susan, that God is a Father to you, and to all, for He never ‘ slumbers nor sleeps,’ but while you call upon Him in faith, He is your ‘ Comforter,’ your ‘ Light’ in darkness, and the morning will soon come, my poor girl, when there will be no more weeping for those who now trust in the merits of their Saviour.”

“ Ah, miss,” said Susan, with an animated countenance, “ that is what I think of, when I lie in such pain, for ‘ I know that my Redeemer liveth,’ and though ‘ worms destroy my body,’ yet, if I die in Christ, I shall live with Him for ever, for He hath redeemed me, and saved me from the wrath to come.”

Here she was so exhausted, that Fanny would not let her speak any more ; and seeing that she was uneasy, and yet could not turn herself, she gently raised her, saying, “ You shall rest upon my shoulder, Susan, and Miss Irwyn will read to us any chapter you like.”

She chose the 42nd Psalm, and the 5th of James. Fanny therefore gave the book to Ellen ;

and while she looked out the chapters, she changed the position of the poor girl.

Ellen looked up surprised, on seeing Fanny so fearlessly raise that corpse-like figure upon her arm, for she had been obliged to untie her bonnet, really sick from the closeness of the room, so unaccustomed was she to enter such a one ; she did not, however, complain, but read the portions of scripture selected by the invalid. At the conclusion, Fanny gently replaced the sufferer on her pillow, and after repeating a prayer for the sick, she told Susan, that Miss Irwyn would visit her very often. Susan expressed herself pleased, and feeling refreshed by the change of position, said, she thought that she could sleep. The girls therefore took their leave, and, on going down stairs, Ellen remarked to the poor woman how very ill Susan appeared. "O yes, indeed she is," replied Mrs. Elliot, "and she can't now feed nor turn herself, but she never says a word, nor gives any trouble." Fanny perceiving that Ellen really looked ill, and had evidently been affected by the sight of such patient suffering, left the cottage without touching on the subject of what had passed, but attracted Ellen's attention to the fine rosy children who were playing in the next house. "These," said she, "are now your charge, Ellen,

and I hope you will not spoil them, or I shall make you stay here the next twelvemonth, to mend all your own mischief.”—She then proposed a run down the hill to Johnson’s cottage, which, together with the fine fresh air, soon restored Ellen both to ‘colour and cheerfulness. She had seen only one object of suffering, but many of happiness and contentment; and while she saw Fanny greeted wherever she went by the blessings of the poor, she could not but envy her those peaceful days which seemed to be her portion. Just as they were leaving Johnson, Herbert and Louis joined them; the former, taking the basket from Fanny, exclaimed, “Always upon ministerial duty! for the first six hours of the day there’s no catching sight of you.”

“Ay,” replied Fanny, “but Ellen has been the ministering angel to-day, I only her shadow.”

“Or rather,” interrupted Ellen, “you have been bishop bestowing blessings, I only your chaplain. No wonder, Louis, you look surprised that Fanny should have elected one so unfit for the office.”

“I am not surprised,” replied Louis, affectionately taking her hand under his arm, “that Fanny should think you fit for any office you

choose to undertake, my dear Ellen, for I believe that you may be led to anything that is right. Oh! would that you would ever take part in that better inheritance of God's own people, in which you would be blest, and be a blessing indeed to all who *love* you."

Ellen walked on in silence, somewhat confused at the tone of seriousness with which Louis had addressed her. He often reproved, but rarely praised her; one word therefore of encouragement, from him was the more valuable. She was not, indeed, ignorant of the partiality with which he had always regarded her; and, during his frequent visits at the Hermitage, his approbation or displeasure had become not indifferent to her; and though she despaired of ever obtaining that esteem, which he seemed to bestow only on more deserving characters, she loved to please him as her brother's friend.

Louis had, indeed, long felt an interest in her welfare, amounting to something more than that of a disinterested person. Her early talents, and the unconscious simplicity with which she possessed them, had first charmed him into the belief that such a disposition would one day form a character of no common excellence; and while his romantic mind formed a fairy vision for the future,

he ventured to attempt the dangerous and "delightful task" of rearing her young mind according to the model of his own fancy. Thus music, singing, drawing, and astronomy, became pursuits of mutual interest; and while he fondly watched the growing influence of his will over her inclinations, he hailed her improvements as sureties of his own domestic happiness. But called away to military duties, his tutorship ended, and too honourable to leave on her mind any impression of his attachment for her while she was so young, he would seek no promise of a continued correspondence; but fully confiding on the influence of his wishes over her, he left her, under the certain conviction, that in a few years he might return and claim her by a nearer and dearer tie. He therefore ventured, more than once, to expatiate on her growing loveliness of disposition to his father, but at last received such a repulse, as made him tremble at the authority which would probably thus mar his brightest hopes of life, as General de Rancy warned him most seriously against forming any romantic attachments; "for," added he, in one of his letters, "you may surely seek happiness in your native country; think no more then of an English baby, nor suffer the follies of early love to interfere with the more manly

hopes of an honourable career , for, on the peril of my utmost displeasure, form no alliance displeasing to the feelings of your Swiss connexions.” It was at this period that his regiment was again stationed at Portsmouth, after a short Spanish campaign of only ten months : and he returned to the Hermitage, full of melancholy forebodings respecting his hopes of Ellen ; but what was his surprise on finding that, in twelve short months, she had lost all that simplicity, which before had eminently marked her character, and that her artless manners were superseded by the love of display, of admiration, and of dress : he saw, indeed, that the change might be traced entirely to a mistaken education, and to the pernicious example of Caroline Herbert ; but finding how easily she was led to follow the influence of evil as well as good, he yielded all his romantic hopes to the wishes of his father, and determined, since it was only making misery for himself and others, to think no more of Ellen than as the sister of his friend. It was at that period, that Herbert pressed him to join in the excursion to Wales, and though he would gladly, for his own sake, have declined it, yet as Herbert was so soon going to India, and as their separation might be for ever, he could not refuse, merely in consideration of his own pri-

vate feelings, to accompany him, and, for the last time, share with him the enjoyments of the ensuing summer ; but he resolved carefully to avoid every attention to Ellen, which the name of brother might not fully justify, and in the journey to Wales he was, perhaps, the only one whose heart was not happy at the prospects before them. But still, with all his promised philosophy, Ellen haunted him ; when she sang, he had never heard so sweet a voice ; if she played, he had never before heard so much soul in music ; in everything she did, he discovered a mind far above her years : and when he found how easily she was governed by the gentle influence of Miss Aubrey, and how much of self-will and of pride had been conquered in a few weeks, he thought within himself, “ If at sixteen she is all this, what may she not be at twenty ? ” and then again he wished he could take the guidance of such a heart into his own hands.

These thoughts were passing in his mind, when he met Ellen returning from her visit to poor Susan’s cottage, blooming with the consciousness of having done well, yet humble under the sense of Fanny’s superiority ; and when on taking her hand, he found he had been unwarily led to insinuate how much of his happiness depended upon

her, he determined to overrule his father's prejudice against an "English connexion," by the strict fulfilment of his wishes in every other respect. With these hopes again brightening the perspective of his future life,⁶ he felt happier than he had done for some time past, and thought he had never enjoyed a walk so much as their present ramble round St. Llenard's hill.

Ellen spoke of her visit to Susan Elliot with feeling and commiseration; of Fanny Seymour and of Miss Aubrey with affection and gratitude: yet there was nothing of display or ostentation in anything she said—she evidently spoke from the heart, humbled in herself, and generous in the praises of her friends.

The next morning a letter arrived from Caroline Herbert, which Louis gave to Ellen with a penetrating look, as if to mark her feelings on reading it: this was, however, unperceived, but, after perusing it, she asked Miss Aubrey if she would like to hear a fashionable letter, and then read it aloud. It was filled with a list of engagements, of dresses, and of the admiration she had excited at a gay race-ball to which she had been introduced. Miss Graham had left her; she was therefore now quite at liberty; and she concluded by saying that her aunt, Lady Selliston,

had taken Chillwood Park for a twelvemonth, and she only wished Ellen would come home, being sure that she would be moped into a complete methodist, if she remained at Llanvair another month.

“ If rosy cheeks and a happy countenance are signs of methodism,” said Herbert, “ then, indeed, Ellen, you are in good earnest moped into one of them.”

“ Oh ! but I do not mind being called a methodist now,” said Ellen ; “ I am only glad that I am away from all the gaieties of Durnford. As to plays and balls, I shall never go to them again.”

“ And why not ?” asked Miss Aubrey ; “ I thought you were fond of both.”

“ I used to be so,” replied Ellen, looking very grave, “ but you have taught me to love better things, so I shall never go to balls again.”

“ Upon what principle would you refuse ?” asked Miss Aubrey ; “ because you have already lost the taste for dancing, or is it that you think the amusement wrong ?”

“ No, indeed,” said Ellen, “ I should never be tired of dancing, but I do not think it a very rational amusement for a Christian.”

“ Indeed,” replied Miss Aubrey, smiling ;

“upon what principle, then, do you think it *wrong*?”

“O I don’t exactly know *why*,” said Ellen, hesitating; “but I *do* think it wrong, I believe, because you do.”

“You should never allow your judgment to yield to that of another, however you may love them, my dear Ellen, without being able to assign a good reason for so doing; but in the present instance you are altogether mistaken, for I do *not* think the mere act of dancing, inconsistent with the principles of Christianity.”

“Not think it wrong?” said Ellen, surprised; “why, I have heard you say that you never go to balls nor plays, and I know that is the reason why Caroline Herbert calls you a methodist.”

“Dancing is not the prominent evil of a ball-room, and forms no part of a theatre, dear Ellen,” mildly replied Miss Aubrey with a smile. “It is a very ancient custom, and seems almost instinctive, so common is it among every savage tribe; and it once formed even a part of *religious worship*,—a part of the most solemn ceremony of Jewish sacrifice, for you may remember that David danced before the ark at its consecration, an instance often quoted by those who would advocate our public assemblies.”

“ Yes,” said Ellen, “ I once heard a lady go so far as to say, that our Saviour himself sanctioned public dancing, in being present at the marriage feast in Cana, at a period when dancing formed part of its ceremony.”

“ Probably it was so,” replied Miss Aubrey, “ in the same sense as in the days of the prophets ; but it is worse than sophistry to argue that therefore the ball-room, *as it now exists*, among enlightened Europeans, can be sanctioned as a amusement in which a *christian professor* can consistently engage.”

“ But surely,” said Ellen, “ the Bible nowhere prohibits public amusements, it only warns us against their abuses.”

“ No !” exclaimed Miss Aubrey, “ what means that solemn injunction, ‘ Whatsoever ye do, do all to the *glory of God* ;’ and did not our blessed Lord enjoin his disciples to take no part in the *pleasures* of the world, when he so emphatically urged them to ‘ love not the world, neither the *things of the world* ?’ Now, *where* is the world ? or where the *things of the world* to which alone our Saviour here could have alluded, if not found within the walls of a theatre or ball-room ? But, dearest Ellen, let us take heed how we invidiously seek to make the kingdom of this world and the

kingdom of God assimilate, when He who cannot deceive, has declared that the two, must be altogether and entirely separate. Let us rather solemnly consider the whole life of Christ, and honestly ask our consciences, whether *his* example gave sanction to *any amusement* which could, directly, or indirectly, tend to alienate the soul from God, or from that ‘holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.’ No, Ellen, *his* whole mission upon earth—*his* every precept, was to urge the very reverse, and to protest against every act, and every sentiment, which could subvert the spirit of a *sanctified life*! Let us then, upon the broad ground of truth itself, fairly investigate our subject, and see whether, by *such test*, the ball-room is of God, or of *the world*. If of the latter, it is unquestionably *prohibited* in the Bible.”

“But does it necessarily follow,” asked Ellen, unwilling to give up her point, “that public amusements *must* alienate the soul from God? I once heard it said by a lady, in conversation with Dr. Herbert, that she could *pray* in a theatre or ball-room with just as much earnestness, as in the retirement of her own closet.”

“To such an assertion, my dear Ellen,” said Miss Aubrey, “I can only quote the reply once

given by a learned and venerable clergyman, to one who made a similar remark: ‘Madam, forgive me then if I say, that you have never yet known what *real prayer is*!’ As to your question, whether it necessarily follows that worldly pleasures alienate us from holier duties, I can only answer, that my own experience proves it, dear Ellen, and the testimony of numbers accords with it. Ask of any conscientious person, whether, in returning from the excitement of a theatre, or ball, or race-course, or from any of those scenes which are called public amusements, the mind is prepared, or even in a *state* of preparation, for its last daily duties of self-examination, and communion with an all-searching, all-seeing God!—nay, even for the rational claims of a rational life?”

“Some minds might, perhaps, be so,” said Ellen; “for instance, nothing could, I do believe, allure *you* from religious duties.”

“Indeed, Ellen, I wish that were true,” gravely replied Miss Aubrey, tears filling her eyes; “there was a time when I entered, and I freely confess, *enjoyed* the world and all its dissipations; but so easily was *I* led from duty, that those years of worldliness were truly years of ungodliness and ill-spent time, leaving no other fruit behind them

than self-reproach, and many a sad association, which, had I not forsaken God, had not outlived the spring-time of my existence. I have returned from balls and plays too much exhausted, and my mind too full of other things, to find inclination even to offer any willing sacrifice of prayer or praise to Him, without whose blessing we cannot be at peace! I have indeed knelt down, and perhaps languidly hurried over a form of words, but the spirit of prayer was gone; the duty was become a restraint, and while my listless tongue uttered a petition to Him who cannot be deceived, even when we perversely deceive ourselves, I knew not what I asked,—I heeded not to whom I prayed; for, at the very moment when my lips have asked for blessings, my thoughts have wandered far from the purport of my words, while I—a very hypocrite—have only worshipped the idols of a delusive world.”

“ But what are your objections to plays?” said Ellen, “ for they neither expose you to late hours, nor to much fatigue; then surely is it not a very innocent recreation? And Dr. Herbert says, many an excellent moral may be gathered from the scenes of a theatre.”

“ And as you seem to accord with him,” replied Miss Aubrey, “ I ought not, perhaps, just now,

to offer my opinion against his judgment—but I confess, in every point of view, a theatre appears to me a school in which many a moral is *sacrificed*. Perhaps there are few plays so perfectly chaste, as not to wound the delicacy of a female ; this is no trifling objection, and yet it is the least : for where is the mind, which has been taught to value the sacred claims of Christianity as essential to spiritual life, that can witness, without feelings of pity and awful apprehension, fellow-creatures not only exposed to a precarious and arduous livelihood merely for the useless gratifications of an audience, but also to a life of temptations, from which those engaged in it can scarcely escape ? It may, perhaps, be illiberal to judge of the private life of an individual by any *outward* appearances ; yet when those appearances so directly militate against the word of God, the inference must surely be, that religious *principle* is but a secondary consideration with such as are actuated by interested motives to labour hard for the ‘ perishable things of time,’ and to neglect ‘ the one thing needful’ for their eternal interests.”

“ Do you then suppose,” said Ellen, “ that no actor can be religious ?”

“ Heaven forbid !” replied Miss Aubrey, “ that I should so judge any human being ; but sure am

I, that no religious person, could be an actor or an actress."

"But I have heard you say," said Ellen, "that all earthly good is mingled with evil; may not a theatre, then, be good in itself, although liable to abuses of evil? for, surely it exemplifies the danger of yielding to ambition, pride;—passion, and revenge."

"It is true, dear Ellen," replied Miss Aubrey, "that evil is, more or less, intermixed with our best works, and purest designs. Nevertheless, we are strictly commanded 'not to do evil that good may arise;' and where evil is the *preponderate* consequence of any action or custom, we should surely abstain from any concurrence with it. Now, the evils of a theatre are most obvious, even in a moral sense; and though it may be a just representation of the world and human nature, have we not, alas! in *real* life, enough of living examples to warn us of the dangers in yielding to any ungoverned passion, whether it be ambition, revenge, or any other criminal feeling, without flying to the mere representation of them to learn a lesson of their consequences? And, in a *religious* point of view, can a theatre excite one sentiment of piety, when we there hear the name of God,—that sacred name, at which the very

devils 'believe and tremble,' lightly called upon and blasphemed? For, even in plays which are called of moral tendency, have you not seen actors and actresses kneel down, and with the most solemn adjurations, call upon the name of the Most High to avert ideal calamities, or implore blessings upon the very scene of such impious blasphemy? Hands which in the temple of the Lord, perhaps, have seldom been lifted up to offer the sacrifice of heartfelt penitence and praise, or sought the needed pardon for daily sins, are there upraised in all the mockery of fervent, *useless* prayer; and can this, Ellen, be heard by pious ears without a feeling of awful dread? Not that I believe the extent of sin thus committed is thought of, or understood, by the aggressors; neither the actors nor spectators intend to do the evil they thus so heedlessly encourage; but yet, in a land like England, few can find the plea of ignorance, however they may be tempted to pervert knowledge."

Ellen listened, deeply impressed with all the arguments of Miss Aubrey; she had never before heard the subject so discussed; but the entrance of Mr. Seymour and Fanny prevented any further remark.

The young people now proposed a walk; but as

Miss Aubrey had promised to accompany Lady Warton in a visit some miles distant, she was obliged to decline joining them. The glen of Calwan was proposed, that Fanny and Louis might take a sketch of the opposite valley. The conversation turned upon Miss Aubrey, and Louis remarked that he had never seen a woman possessed of so fine a mind.

“Indeed,” replied Fanny, “I believe few surpass her, for she not only possesses a highly cultivated mind, but a heart truly devoted to Christianity.

“Is she much at Llanvair?” asked Herbert, “for she seems at home amongst its people as if it were her native place.”

“During the last four years,” said Fanny, “she has been almost a resident at the Hall; Lady Warton is so fond of her, she scarcely knows how to part with her.”

“Is she then a relation of Lady Warton?” said Louis.

“None whatever,” replied Fanny, “she has scarcely a relative in the world. She was early left an orphan to the guardianship of an elder brother, but he is dead, and she has only a sister living in Scotland, married to a man of such op-

posite principles to those of Miss Aubrey, that there is little union between them."

"She looks as if she had known happier days," said Louis.

"Sorrow has, indeed, been her portion," replied Fanny, "but truly has it been blest to her; I have heard that she was once the gayest of the gay, surrounded by friends, by family, and by fortune; she was almost the idol of her brother, and her young sister was the dearest object of her care. Of these she is now bereaved; but I believe the stroke which touched the root of happiness was the death of a young man, to whom, after an attachment of many years, she was on the eve of being married;—the blow was sudden, and it destroyed the last tie of earthly hope; but while it closed the bright vision of a happy life, it opened to her the perspective of a brighter inheritance. It darkened earth, that the light of heaven might appear the more transcendent, and, I believe, it is now almost the ruling principle of every thought, hope, and wish: but to form a just estimate of her worth, you must know her long, for diffidence conceals the superiority of her mind and talents, which are still subservient to all the humbler duties of a simple Christian."

“ You have drawn a lovely character,” said Louis, “ but I dare say it has not been too highly coloured. I do not wonder that you value her friendship both, as a privilege and pleasure ; nor can you, Ellen, sufficiently appreciate the advantage of such an acquaintance.”

“ Oh ! I do love Miss Aubrey^{*} dearly,” said Ellen, “ and you will see, Louis, if I do not try to become like her.”

“ To see you so would be a day of thankfulness to me, as to yourself,” returned Louis ; “ only, dear Ellen, guard against self-confidence—that rock upon which, I fear, you will too often split.”

Ellen was silent, and Fanny, resuming the subject, always an inspiring theme to her, said, “ To me, Miss Aubrey has been a friend in the fullest sense of that endearing name. To her, I am indebted for many a happy feeling, many a pleasing resource, and being entirely confined to the retirement of this village, but for her I should, perhaps, scarcely have known the blessing of an intimate and unreserved friendship ; for there are no young people in our neighbourhood with whom I could have formed such a one, and the distance which separated me from Ellen, of course,

precluded the immediate cultivation of so near a tie."

"She must, I think, be a universal loss to Llanvair; but is she never here in winter?" asked Louis.

"Oh, never!" replied Fanny; "her friends in London claim her for that season, where she generally remains till the end of May, as she likes to attend the religious associations which meet at that period; indeed she is an active supporter to many of them, particularly that for the conversion of the Jews, in which she is zealously interested."

"I declare I thought so," exclaimed Louis, smiling, by the gentle reproof she gave me last night, when I said that England only impoverished itself, by attempting the conversion of other countries; and which, by the way, would have led to an interesting conversation between us, had not little Althea Stacy put an end to it, by claiming Miss Aubrey to herself; but somehow or other, she seems to have time, head, and heart, for every one: but I will argue the point with her yet."

"Well," said Ellen, "if Miss Aubrey were as much with me, as she is with you, Fanny, I should

be quite miserable without her." "Then," replied Fanny, "you would convert a blessing to an evil, my dear Ellen. I hope, I do love her gratefully; but, thank God, I have ample occupation to fill every moment of my days, particularly when she is gone, as her duties here, then fall into mine, and there is nothing like employment to prevent the indulgence of melancholy regrets; which, much as I miss her, would be ungrateful to my father, who bestows all his winter's evenings to amuse me, when he might otherwise dine out, five days out of the seven. But here we really must divide parties; Louis and I to scramble up this narrow pathway, from which I think, we may find a lovely scene for our sketches, and in the meantime Herbert had better take you to see those beautiful trees we spoke of yesterday,"

Here they accordingly separated till the sketches were finished, and then returning home, they passed the remainder of the day in that cheerful harmony, which must ever exist between those of united sentiments and pursuits.

Ellen from that time continued to enjoy, and steadily pursue, those daily duties into which she had entered. She punctually attended her little district, and though at first she had always taken

Johnson with her in her visits to poor Susan, fearful of being left alone with her lest she "should die," she now fearlessly encountered the trial, without a wish for the support of a third person. She was surprised to find how much better acquainted with every part of the Bible, that poor girl was than herself, for often when Susan had requested her to read any particular parable or favourite portion, Ellen was puzzled to find out in what part of the Testament it was written. This completely humbled her pride in the superiority of those talents which she possessed, useless, compared to that first of essential attainments—the knowledge of scripture, in which she was so perfectly ignorant, and in which that simple cottager found her greatest delight.

One day, Ellen asked her, if she would not like to have some other book to read beside the Bible, some pretty little story that might amuse her, for that she must be very dull, so ill, and yet so much alone?

"Oh no, miss!" replied Susan, "I don't like any book so well as the Bible. Miss Fanny gave me the 'Dairyman's Daughter,' and that was very pretty reading, but now I'm so bad, I don't think I should like any book so well as the Bible."

"And can you understand all of it?" asked Ellen.

“ Oh no ! I dare say I can't, not all of it,” replied Susan ; “ but God is very good, for He has written enough for poor people to learn, as well as rich.”

“ And what a blessing it is, Susan, that you were taught to read !”

“ Yes, indeed it is, and I hope God will bless Mr. Seymour and Miss Fanny, for they take a great deal of pains to make the poor children learn ; and Mr. Seymour tells us all about the Bible so plain, that we can't say that we don't know our duty. If I had never read the Bible, I should think myself very hardly done by, because I am always so sick and poor, but now I know that ‘ God's ways are not like ours,’ but that, according to His will, some are rich, and some are poor ; but ‘ whosoever believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,’ since God is ‘ no respecter of persons.’ ”

“ And do you never feel tired of being in bed, and wish to go out as others do ?”

“ Oh yes, sometimes I am very impatient, and could somehow wish to die, but I think how wicked that is, and then I remember the words in the Bible, where God has promised that ‘ the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and that if he have committed

sins, they shall be forgiven him.' Now this makes me feel *very* happy, because though I am sinful, yet I hope to be forgiven, and though I am sick now, I shall be quite well in heaven."

To such conversations Ellen would always listen with equal astonishment and interest. If *she* only had a headache, she was weary of the pain; and if obliged to keep her bed only one day, she was restless and miserable; yet this poor sufferer, bereaved of every earthly comfort, had been, for seven long months, confined to a hard bed, with scarcely a glimpse of sunshine to cheer her dark abode,—and all this without a murmur, without a wish to change the will of God—and now, she could even talk of being "very happy!"

From what source then, thought Ellen, can such happiness be derived?—it is indeed "peace which passeth understanding"—*peace* given "not as the world giveth," for it is such as no sickness can destroy, no sorrow can wither! Why then do I not more earnestly seek it, that when I come to die, I may be as happy as this poor girl is?"

Thus, in the pursuance of duty, Ellen became cheerful: but time flew rapidly over the enjoyments of such constant and happy occupations; the long days appeared too short, for the fulfilment of all their engagements; and as the period

drew near for their return to England, Ellen sighed as she thought of Caroline Herbert, and a renewal of those pursuits, which she knew would expose her to a renewal of temptations. “ However, said she to herself, “they shall not allure me again to love the things of the world. I shall visit the sick, and teach the poor at Lymington, as Fanny does here. Louis shall find that *instability* is not *always*—the rock upon which I split.”

CHAPTER VI.

"THIS day," said Herbert, as he joined the cheerful party assembled round the breakfast table at Llanvair, "hails with its brightest smiles the first return of an autumnal sun. September thus opens to us a scene fraught with new glories—new anticipations; yet it is man, for whom these varied pleasures are ordained, who alone sighs over the remembrance of past pleasures, and would murmur at their close, as if joy were confined to one fleeting season, or as if winter could close that source of happiness, which is opened to the Christian in every season, age, and country."

"Why, Herbert," said Louis, looking at the serious countenance of his friend, "I thought you went to bed last night a very harlequin, but the 'spirit of your dream' seems changed, and morning finds you turned moralist."

“And I think,” replied Herbert, “that your heart will catch the spirit of my philosophy; for I guess this letter,” added he, taking one directed to Louis from a packet which he held in his hand, “will somewhat sadden that bright smile of yours.”

“An official one, in all due submission to its red imperials,” exclaimed Louis, “and a summons in good earnest! Well,” added he, sighing, “I expected it, but it comes as a sad antidote to a merry breakfast.”

“Surely,” said Lady Warton, addressing Herbert and Louis alternately, “you are not yet called away from us.”

“I am sorry to say,” replied Herbert, “that this day fortnight is fixed on for our return to Lymington. That letter to Louis came enclosed in a packet from my mother, who tells me that my commission has been granted, and my passage to India already secured in one of the ships going out in the October fleet. Louis must also join his regiment in about a fortnight, and my mother wishes us to return with him, that I may remain with her the last few weeks of my being in England: a summons, which, of course, admits of no further reprieve.”

“This is indeed a sad spirit come over the face

of things," said Lady Warton ; " I hope, however, that we shall all meet again—"

" I fear," replied Herbert gravely, " that many a summer's sun must bronze my face before I can again behold the country that will always be the dearest to my heart."

Lady Warton looked at Herbert with an expression of almost maternal affection, and caught the sadness of his forebodings, as she too truly believed the prophecy ; " and yet," thought she, " why should I mourn ? his is the path of duty, and he will probably return in a few years, in the full manhood of his life, with all the honours of a christian career. I, indeed, cannot expect to be here to hail his return, but we shall meet again in that happier world, where parting will not be known."

A general silence of some minutes ensued, for the question, " When shall we all meet again ? " had fallen heavily on the heart of each.

Ellen had not spoken, but the tears rolled down her cheeks, as she heard the sad intelligence of their summons ; but, at last, as she thought of the anticipation of so long a separation from her brother, she leaned her head upon Miss Aubrey's shoulder, and gave free vent to her feelings.

" Oh ! what will become of me when my dear,

dear Herbert is gone?" exclaimed she, "I shall never see him again."

Herbert went to her, and affectionately endeavoured to offer consolation, by reminding her that they would still be many weeks together. "Let us not then, Ellen," said he, "make duty a painful trial; in a few years we may meet again, and in the mean time, think of the pleasure we may bestow and share, in doing our best while separated, to ensure, if it be the will of God, a happy meeting even here, and an eternal one hereafter."

"Oh," replied Ellen mournfully, "but I shall have nobody left to love, or care for me, obliged to live in that vile place Lymington, where I shall love nobody but mamma."

"But you will have many duties, dear Ellen, to care for," said Miss Aubrey, "and that must sweeten every situation,—enliven every place; and then, as you are not going to India, you can come here again next summer, when we shall increase your little district, and make you the busiest of the busy! Think, Ellen, of the pleasure we shall enjoy in resuming all our village cares, and I shall write to you very often; but come," added she, wiping the remaining tears from Ellen's cheeks, "as Herbert says, we must not be the only beings

of nature's creation, to sorrow at the close of past blessings, when so bright a sun meets us as an earnest of continued mercies. We have a long fortnight yet to be together, so we must make the most of our time, for we shall find many things to do, and much to say. To begin then, let us now go and visit your poor invalid; and then to the school, where, I dare say, we shall find Fanny busily employed in distributing her weekly rewards." So saying, both left the room, and Ellen soon appeared with a brighter countenance, ready for her errand."

It would be needless to describe the feelings of regret excited at the Priory, by the anticipation of Herbert's departure; they were all that affection could express, but were still subservient to those of perfect resignation to the will of God, who for the same wise and ordains bereavement, or continued possession of blessings, as He alone can foresee to be most fitting for our eternal interests. The ensuing ten days were therefore passed in cheerful enjoyment of each other's society; but the Sunday now approached which would probably be the last, shared together for many years; and before the return of such another,—ah! who could say, over whom might pass the messenger

of death, whose mandate must be obeyed alike by young and old, and whose touch no human agency can avert?

The sacrament was administered on that day, to the communicants of Llanvair; when all the family party at the Hall, with the exception of Ellen, remained to partake of the "blessings attached to that holy ordinance, in remembrance of that most precious sacrifice of a Saviour's "body and blood," through which alone, we hope for grace and mercy here, and reunion with those we love in the world to come.

On their return home, each retired to separate rooms, and Louis to the library, where he was surprised to find Ellen sitting mournfully, with her arm resting on a large Bible, opened at the description of our Lord's supper, over which she appeared so intently engaged, that Louis remained some moments in the room, before she knew that he was near her. She had evidently retired there on her return from church, as her pelisse was merely loosened, and her bonnet thrown down carelessly by her side, while large tears slowly fell from her downcast eyes, as if wrung from some inward feeling, too deep for expression. Louis, fearful of alarming her, drew back, hesitating for a moment whether to advance and speak; but the

action startled her, and he then came gently forward, and assuming a cheerful voice, he said, "Why, my dear Ellen, I have never seen you look so serious, or so very sad, before!"

"Because," replied Ellen, deeply blushing, "I have never before thought so seriously on a serious subject, or so sadly upon the state of my own mind and heart."

"And what has led you to such thoughts?" asked Louis.

"The Lord's supper," replied Ellen, with a tone of deep feeling, "from which I alone of twelve, like a second Iscariot, have turned away, while others have fed from the sacred cup of everlasting life."

"Dearest Ellen," said Louis, affectionately taking her hand, "in this instance you condemn yourself unjustly: unprepared as you are for so solemn a rite, you have done well, for the present, to decline it; but, oh! Ellen, let *to-day* be the dawning of a life sealed for devotedness to your Lord and Saviour! No longer halt between two opinions. Go boldly to the throne of grace; doubt not your acceptance there, and when again invited 'to drink of the cup,' and partake of the bread, those blessed symbols of a Saviour's love, 'draw nigh in faith,' and become a partaker of both its blessings and its promises."

After a lengthened conversation, of sincere humility on the one side, and of affectionate encouragement on the other, Ellen looked up, with a brighter countenance, and earnestly exclaimed,—“ Oh! Louis, to be a Christian in spirit, as in name, is, indeed, my fervent, heartfelt desire!—I would now do anything, everything to prove myself a sincere follower of the ‘ Lamb of God.’ But, I dread my return to Lymington, where religion is only ridiculed and condemned. My very endeavours to promote it would be called fanaticism, and only injure the cause, by exposing it tenfold to sarcasm and reproach.”

“ I know no place,” replied Louis, “ where you may find so many opportunities of doing good as in one where religion is so much neglected: but you must guard most carefully against the fanaticism to which your zeal may lead you. Remember that enthusiasm, particularly where religion is concerned, is an insidious master, leading captive the judgment which is not under the control of a well-grounded faith. To the inexperienced Christian, it is rather a fatal, than a useful implement; but let your example in all those christian virtues, which you would endeavour to excite in others, speak even more powerfully than your precepts. Under reproach or injury, be patient,

resigned, and, if possible, be cheerful ; humble in yourself, be gentle towards others ; stedfast in the pursuance of your own duties, let not the influence of the world check your continuance in well-doing ; but, above all, remember how weak are our best efforts without the especial grace of God assisting us ; most earnestly, therefore, pray to be preserved from self-confidence, lest you should again fall under the fatal power of such as Caroline Herbert."

" Oh, no," replied Ellen, " I am determined to yield no more to her influence, and I need not be so much with her again, now that Miss Graham is gone : I wish, indeed, that I could persuade her to live as Fanny Seymour does ; but if I fail in that, she shall not tempt me again to follow her own example."

" Heaven graht it," was all that Louis could reply, as Miss Aubrey and Fanny, who had been looking for Ellen, now entered the library ; they proposed a walk to visit a sick cottager, and Louis, for once, leaving Ellen with her brother and Fanny, joined Miss Aubrey, and related to her all that had passed. They agreed that as Ellen was so desirous of receiving the sacrament, she should immediately be prepared for the solemn engagement. Miss Aubrey, therefore, promised

to speak to her upon the subject, and explain, as clearly as her judgment would permit, the nature of so sacred and binding an obligation. Louis then told her most unreservedly of the interest he felt in Ellen's welfare, his intention of declaring his affection for her to Mrs. Irwyn, immediately on his return, and of the situation in which he stood respecting his father; but he added, that as in all probability he would shortly visit Switzerland, he would urgently endeavour to overcome his father's prejudice against a foreign connexion. Miss Aubrey was not surprised at this communication, as his partiality to Ellen had not escaped her penetration; and, deeply interested for them both, she promised to exert her utmost endeavours to preserve Ellen's mind in its present bias. She acknowledged, that there was much excellence of disposition to build upon and admire, and that it was almost impossible to resist her affectionate solicitude to please those, who evinced the slightest degree of anxiety or interest in her behalf. "But still," added Miss Aubrey, "I cannot but tremble when I see how completely she is the creature of impulse, how much under the control of influence; placed in a situation of peculiar temptation, and standing alone to brave the current of bad examples."

During the remainder of the day, Ellen was unusually silent and grave ; but Miss Aubrey endeavoured to divert her mind, by dwelling much on the attendant cheerfulness and comforts of religion ; so that, when they parted at the close of the evening service, she felt an inward conviction that there was no peace like that of a well-spent day.

Only two days now remained to enjoy the pleasures of Llanvair. For the last time Ellen went to visit poor Susan Elliot, from whom she received the most grateful acknowledgments for her kindness ; she then distributed presents to the children of her little district, and returned to Fanny Seymour, to give up all the insignia of her office. Lady Warton and her party were to dine at the Priory ; Ellen, therefore, remained with Fanny during the morning, when they expressed the feelings of mutual affection now rooted between them, and promised that an unreserved intercourse should be, henceforth, steadily preserved. Mr. Seymour, who saw that a disposition such as Ellen's must be exposed to many trials, many temptations, felt for her almost a parent's anxiety ; he wished much that she might have remained with Fanny till her character were more decidedly formed, but he saw the impossibility of retaining

her from her mother, and therefore would not venture to propose it ; but promised, if circumstances would permit her leaving home, he would endeavour to obtain Mrs. Irwyn's consent to her passing the next summer months at St. Llenards. He then led her to his study, and, as a remembrance of his best wishes, gave her a beautiful edition of Scott's Bible, entreating, that as she had begun a course of sacred reading, she would steadily pursue it. " Read it, Ellen," continued Mr. Seymour, " with all the docility of a little child, as the sacred inspirations of your heavenly Father, given to teach us the only way to obtain everlasting life. It is the Book, whence babes may gather wisdom, and old men, instruction ; for it is as ' a lamp unto our feet ' in all the difficult and dangerous passages of an evil world ;—' a light unto our path,' while pressing on to find the ' narrow way ' which leadeth to eternal life. It is as the voice of God, calling us to follow in the track of His ' well-beloved Son ;'—the ' word of God,' speaking to the heart of ' righteousness and judgment ;'—of death, through the ' wages of sin ;'—of life, through faith in Him, who *alone, and only*, is the Mediator betwixt God and man ; our ' Lord,' our ' Life,' and our ' Resurrection !' Shall we then, Ellen, neglect ' so great

salvation?" Shall we possess this living epistle of the eternal will of God, and let it be to us a 'sealed book?' No, my child; take it rather, as the sacred legacy of your dying Saviour, and read it as your daily guide, meekly praying, that through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, it may impart to your understanding the 'wisdom of the serpent;' and to your will, 'the harmlessness of the dove.'"

Ellen received the gift, and felt grateful for the kind solicitude with which it was given. She assured Mr. Seymour that his advice should not be forgotten, and that she would endeavour to profit by the advantages which she had lately enjoyed. He ventured also to advise her respecting Caroline Herbert, and to caution her against that specious profession, which, bearing the name of *friendship*, might again unwarily lead her under the influence of its power: assuring her at the same time, that if ever she should need a parent's care, or the shelter of a home, she should never seek them in vain at St. Llenard's Priory, where, at all times and in all circumstances, she should be received and welcomed as a second child.

The arrival of Lady Warton and her young guests here put an end to the subject, as Mr. Seymour was summoned to join them in the drawing-

room, where they were all engaged in looking at two small paintings which Fanny had just completed for Herbert. One was a view of Llanvair, the other of St. Llenard's Priory, highly finished in oils, and beautifully executed. Ellen asked from whence that of St. Llenard's had been taken, and Mr. Seymour offered to escort her to the very mount, as it was not beyond his own little domain. Herbert and Fanny, being anxious to compare the representation with the reality, accompanied them, leaving Lady Warton and Miss Aubrey in charge of Louis. Mr. Seymour did not remain long with the young people; and, on rejoining the others, he found Miss Aubrey and Louis warmly contesting some topic which seemed equally to interest both the speakers. "Pray," said he, as he entered the room, "what may be the subject of so animated a discussion?"

"The conversion of the Jews," replied Herbert.

"And what is the question?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"Whether our attempt to convert the Jews," replied Louis, "is not more likely to impoverish our own country, than to hasten the desired restoration?"

“ Then,” said Mr. Seymour, “ your opinion is of course in favour of the question.”

“ Certainly,” replied Louis hesitatingly ; “ I am arguing against the probability that England, —which is literally only a speck in the creation, —should be made the favoured instrument of promoting the fulfilment of a prophecy, which, after all, we understand but faintly, and the fulfilment of which probably remains for the days of the millennium.”

“ Well then, young captain,” exclaimed Mr. Seymour, “ I will venture anything I possess, that you do not make your cause good, and ten times as much, if in less than two hours Miss Aubrey does not make you a proselyte to her own opinion. You have a powerful head to deal with, let me tell you.”

“ Thank you, my dear sir,” said Miss Aubrey, smiling, “ for thus abetting me, for perhaps there is no stratagem in gaining a conquest like that of alarming the adversary : and although there are but few points in which I would not willingly yield my judgment to that of Captain de Rancy, in this instance I confess that I should indeed be sorry, were he to prove the more powerful.”

Here Mr. Seymour brought in array before

the combatants, Newton and all the best commentators on the prophecy in question ; but the Bible was the only authority Miss Aubrey desired. Louis endeavoured to prove that many centuries must elapse before Israel shall be a restored nation, as the fulfilment of that prophecy was always promised in the latter days. “ Now,” added he, “ although we know not in what period the latter days shall be, yet, as there are still many remaining prophecies to be accomplished before the gathering together of the Jews, we may surely conclude that those days are not yet at hand ; why, then, should we presume to suppose that the power is our own, to hasten the purposes of the Almighty ?”

“ We may certainly look forward to some few ages before the complete re-establishment of Jerusalem,” replied Miss Aubrey ; “ yet how can we assert that it will not be a work of *many* centuries, consequently that it has not even now commenced ? All the *earlier* prophecies, which were given ages before their completion, have been, not only fulfilled, but clearly proved to us on undoubted evidence. Babylon—‘ the glory of kingdoms ’—for the wilful transgressions of her people, has been overthrown and desolated ; there, ‘ the shepherds can no longer make their fold,’ for wild beasts have

gathered round it, and their houses are ‘ full of doleful creatures ’—a prophecy which has been so wonderfully fulfilled, that even to this day, the ruins of Babylon are so overrun with serpents and venomous reptiles, that no one dare approach it, excepting for two months in the winter. From Israel, too, the ‘ glory of the Lord ’ is departed. One stone of her temple is not left upon another. The happy land—Israel’s very Salem—has been degraded—called ‘ Desolate ’—‘ Forsaken.’ But, at the very time of its threatened destruction, a gracious promise was given, that a ‘ star should arise out of Judah, to be the glory of the people Israel :’—‘ a root of Jesse,’—‘ in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed ;’ for although Israel should be ‘ no more a nation,’ and her people be scattered over the earth, yet a ‘ *remnant* ’ should be saved, by which the Kingdom is eventually to be restored. Now a part of this prophecy has been already fulfilled. The Star has risen—the Root of Jesse has flourished—and a remnant of Israel has been preserved, which, although *now* scattered, the Lord shall gather again, and ‘ keep as a shepherd doth his flock.’ ”

“ Then,” said Louis, “ why not leave it for the Shepherd whose care is sufficient for it, and

who will surely redeem it according to His word? Why should England claim the privilege of its restoration, since ‘*all nations*,’ not England alone, shall be blessed in that glorious day? It is not in Britain only, that the remnant is scattered.”

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“Various are the ways of the Almighty,” replied Miss Aubrey, “to effect His purposes, and infinite wisdom directs them all. Before the *coming* of our Lord, God wrought them by prophecies, by visions, and by His own immediate interposition. During the *time* of our Lord, it was by signs and wonders—by miracles—and by the immediate *presence* of our Saviour. His resurrection terminated the mission of His coming;—God’s purposes were fulfilled,—atonement was completed, and salvation proclaimed;—therefore, according to the will of God, miracles have ceased, —prophecy is no more!—But is not the work of universal redemption *still* going on? Must not the promises of the Lord, ‘whose counsels shall stand for ever,’ all be fulfilled?—Shall not every *remaining* prophecy be accomplished, although the *days of prophecy* are over? And, since the remnant of God’s ancient people are to be again restored as a ‘mighty nation,’ and many of those wandering exiles now tarry in our land, is it pre-

sumption to suppose, that of us it has been said, 'I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem?'—'ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and *give Him no rest*, until He establish and make Jerusalem a *praise* in the earth!' Where then is our faith, if this favoured country, on which are bestowed the *means* of distributing the word of God, withholds the treasure from heathen lands, because afraid that its own might lose a small portion of its perishable wealth? Glorious is the cause in which England is engaged! Let not her people shrink from the difficulties of so exalted—so heavenly a commission."

"If indeed," said Louis, "our gold could enrich the heathen countries with the treasures of heaven, poverty to us would then be a tenfold blessing: but, in giving, are we *sure* that Jews and Infidels *receive*? Is it not known that our gifts have been perverted?—and perhaps in offering temptation we only encourage imposition."

"And is it," exclaimed Miss Aubrey, "because some, like Annanias, are unfaithful in the stewardship of God's treasury, that *we* should disobey the direct command of God, to send forth, even 'unto the end of the world,' the blessed

proclamation, ' Behold, thy salvation cometh ?' or refuse, at *any cost*, to call back the wandering sheep of Israel, through whose very means, we ourselves became the adopted children of the covenant, and joint-heirs of the ' new Jerusalem ?' No ; on the impostors must fall the consequences of their imposture ; but not in our hands must rest the charge of disobedience ! And, as to either the *time*, or means by which such deliverance shall be wrought, it is not for us to question the prophetic declarations of Jehovah. Where is our faith, if we believe not the *possibility*, because we see not the *probability*, that the work of restoration is *now* going on, through means, apparently weak, indeed, but strong in effect, if the Lord Himself inspires our efforts, and His own hand directs our willing agency ? And is it not said of the Israelites, that our ' queens should be ~~the~~ their nursing mothers,' and Gentile kings their nursing fathers ?' a prophecy so wonderfully fulfilling in this our day, even under the very name and sanction of our own beloved sovereign, and through Christian kings, whose hearts are taught compassion for the stricken people of God's anointed nation, that blind must be the eyes which cannot see, and

deaf the ears which cannot hear, the hand of the Lord, and the word of the Lord, going to and fro throughout the earth, to gather together from every country and people, the outcast 'remnant of the house of Israel,' the first-born of the everlasting covenant! Oh! shall this mission then belong to England and yet her people not glory in the blessing? Remember that both a command and a promise has sealed the sacred embassy, 'Oh pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper who love her.'"

"Enough," said Louis, smiling at the enthusiastic energy with which Miss Aubrey had supported her favourite cause, "I confess myself a convert to your opinion. I have never before seriously considered the question; but in truth your arguments in its favour are powerful, and henceforth I will consider myself bound to support it. In surety of which," added he, giving five pounds to Miss Aubrey, "take this, and henceforth remember, that I am an annual debtor to your society for the same sum, which—let me be where I may—you may always claim from my agents, to whom your name will be a sufficient bond."

"And is it given," said Miss Aubrey, "for the *Jews'* sake—not for mine?"

“ For the Jews’ sake *only*,” replied Louis, “ do I give and bequeath a soldier’s mite.”

“ Then,” said Miss Aubrey, smiling, “ in the Jews’ name, do I sincerely thank you ; and in my own, I fain would ask my generous adversary to forgive the freedom of my speech towards him, in this warfare of contending sentiments.”

“ Nay, it is I, who would seek a boon of you, sweet lady,” answered Louis, “ that, *adversary* no longer, I might be privileged, like others at Llanvair, to claim you henceforth as my chosen *friend*.”

“ Now, young man,” said Mr. Seymour, “ from this time, never dare again assert, that woman is man’s inferior in mental powers ;—but here are our young ones, and I fancy the dinner-bell must have summoned them, by the haste in which they are returning.”

Scarcely had Mr. Seymour spoken before the bell was heard, and as soon as the young people were ready, they all adjourned to the dining-room. Louis claimed Ellen and Miss Aubrey as his charge. Much conversation ensued between them on the present system of educating the poor, in which many arguments for and against the national schools were brought forward. Louis be-

came more and more delighted with Miss Aubrey, and he afterwards confessed to Mr. Seymour, that he had never met with one possessing such combined powers of heart and mind.

On separating in the evening, Lady Warton reminded Mr. Seymour that the present party were all to meet the ensuing day at the Hall; and tears glistened in her eyes as she added, "Pray let it be a long one, as you know it is the last which we shall enjoy with our children."

The next morning none appeared in their accustomed spirits;—the breakfast passed almost in silence, interrupted only by a few commonplace remarks. Herbert left them as soon as it was over, saying that he was going to the Priory, and should not return till dinner. Miss Aubrey was somewhat surprised that Ellen did not offer to accompany her brother to pass the last day with Fanny; but upon asking if she did not intend it, Ellen blushed, and only replied, "No, I will remain with you;" upon which Lady Warton immediately said, evidently with some purpose, "Herbert is a deserter, but I hope none of the others will leave me this morning, as the last day brings with it a thousand engagements, for which I am now selfish enough to claim them. Nothing

more was said, nor was any mention made, during the remainder of the morning, either of Herbert or St. Llenard's Priory.

The day advanced, and dinner was nearly at hand, before Mr. Seymour and Fanny made their appearance. Lady Warton complained of their truancy, when Mr. Seymour only answered, "To tell you the truth, Herbert so beguiled my morning, that I almost lost sight of time, till time reminded me that he could wait for no man." This was said in a tone of playfulness, but still much penetration was not required to see something had occurred of no small interest to the parties concerned. Fanny was less lively than usual; and though a stranger might not have remarked her being otherwise than cheerful, yet she was extremely pale, and those who knew her mind, saw that the cheerfulness she assumed was evidently a struggle against feeling. Mr. Seymour strove to keep up the spirits of all parties; he spoke frequently to Fanny, and in a tone of more affectionate solicitude than even he was wont to betray. Herbert was silent and depressed, as if afraid a word might expose feelings which he endeavoured in vain to conceal; while poor Ellen, with the thoughts of to-morrow hanging over her, would not for a moment leave Miss Aubrey's

side ; but whenever she was addressed, a tear was her only reply. Lady Warton, too, as she thought of the future welfare of her favourite boy, with whom she was about to part, perhaps for ever, was busy in the past : associations of former days were recalled as she looked on the children now before her, as living memorials of those, who, in bygone days, had been so very dear to her, but were no more ! Thus each caught the sadness of the other ; and although music, and the children, and all their baby pleasures, were brought forward as antidotes, nothing could quite dispel the mournful anticipations which at present clouded their happiness.

Mr. Seymour proposed going home earlier than usual, as he said the travellers ought to be allowed as long a night as possible. Ellen wept bitterly as Fanny Seymour took an affectionate leave of her, promising a continued interest in her welfare. Herbert begged to be their escort, but assured Lady Warton, that he would return in time to join the evening prayer.

He walked silently by the side of Mr. Seymour, till, on entering the Priory, he followed him to the study, leaving Fanny alone in the drawing-room, and said as he closed the door, " May I, my dear sir, only ask one little indulgence, the

favour of corresponding with Fanny, although you will not permit our engagement?"

Mr. Seymour, pained by the expression of Herbert's solicitation, answered, taking his hand with the utmost affection, "I see, my dear Herbert, that you will not enter into the motives which urge me to refuse a request that, I confess, is not only reasonable, but perfectly consistent with all I wish you to feel: do not then let us part, perhaps for many years, under any misunderstanding, nor leave me as a son under some severe sentence of unjust authority. I know not the man, Herbert, to whom I would so fearlessly confide the happiness of my beloved child, so confidently entrust the charge of this my best treasure. I have, for many years, anticipated your union with her as the fulfilment of my most anxious desire; I have witnessed your mutual attachment and growing worth, with the delight of a fond parent interested alike in each of you; I am not changed, my wishes remain the same; but if, with a clearer foresight, which age and the experience of life have bestowed on me, I can better estimate the essentials of happiness, must I, from the false indulgence of sparing you a momentary pang, suffer you to enter upon an engagement of such uncertain prospects? Let me ask you, Herbert,

could you, on your present limited income, support a wife, and continue to her all the comforts of a home, humble as it is, to which she has been accustomed from her birth, and in India too, where tenfold the sum would not answer the demands of a family? Do you love Fanny, and wish to expose her to so severe a trial?"

"O no," said Herbert, "marriage is at present, I know, out of the question; but where can rest the objection to our engagement? Do you suppose that ten years will change my heart or principles?"

"I truly believe," replied Mr. Seymour, "that twenty years will make no change but to improve them: but as yet, Herbert, you have seen nothing of the world; your taste has been modelled from the domestic quietness which in our humble sphere you have witnessed and enjoyed, and you therefore believe that Fanny, as its ornament, would in every circle still shine superior, and be your pride and your delight; but when you go into a world where you will see the brightest assemblage of talent and beauty, and find, too, that such are the baubles on which men raise their vision of marriage happiness, would you never look with envy upon such? and when in a few years your views of happiness are changed, and the more peaceful plea-

asures of retirement are forgotten in the blaze of wealth and splendour, which will then perhaps surround you,—may you not sometimes think of her, who, as an artless country girl, won your young heart, as a tie which binds you to an irksome engagement which will then perhaps, no longer please, no longer content you ?”

“ Oh ! never, never,” exclaimed Herbert, “ can my heart so lose its love of goodness : and where is the sphere in which Fanny might not shine as first in loveliness and worth ?”

“ But are these the only considerations to which a father must look forward ?” replied Mr. Seymour. “ Supposing that you leave the dissipated courts of India unchanged, yet are you sure that your career will be successful, and that you will return with power to fulfil the engagement to which you would now bind yourself and Fanny ?”

“ No exertions on my part,” said Herbert, “ shall be spared to promote it ; then surely I can scarcely fail, if life and health be continued to me.”

“ It is not always that temporal advancement can be ensured by human exertion,” replied Mr. Seymour, “ although I am sure, that none will be wanting on your part ; but am I, upon the chance

of all these *ifs*, to sacrifice the peace of my child, which, perhaps, rests upon the decision of this present hour? Supposing that I consent to the engagement you solicit, and you return still unable to meet the expenses of a family, would it not then, indeed, be hard, after ten years of faithful intercourse and well-tried affection, to relinquish the hope which had so long united you to each other? Ask not, Herbert, so great a sacrifice. Fanny is yet but a child, and in ten years, if those be granted to you both, you may return and find her still in the springtime of life, the same in heart, improved in mind, and matured in judgment; her cheek, I hope, will still be untouched by care; then, if circumstances permit, and your hearts remain the same towards each other, if you have sought no brighter charm,—loved no fairer flower than this simple lily of Llanvair, *then* may you claim her as your own and a father's best blessing shall consecrate the sacred tie."

"I believe," replied Herbert, with a deep sigh, "that you have chosen for me the path of duty. God's will be done then, and may I be enabled to pursue it, in the firm conviction of His infinite wisdom, in the direction of every event. As to

my affection, I fear no test of time ; nor can wealth buy me one earthly blessing, if not shared by Fanny Seymour ; but I submit, and when we meet again, my best friend," added he, taking Mr. Seymour's hand, " may it be, indeed, as father and son."

" Believe me, my dear Herbert," replied Mr. Seymour, " that my feelings towards you will never be otherwise ; and as a fond parent will I daily implore Heaven's choicest blessings for you : but it is growing late, and I must not detain you ; therefore go and see Fanny, and then once more let me say, God bless you."

Herbert left him without further reply, but his heart died within him as he entered the drawing-room.

Fanny rose to meet him, and endeavouring to assume a tone of playfulness, said, " You have left a very unequal portion of your hour for me, Herbert, and we must not forget Lady Warton's injunction : " but as she spoke, in spite of herself tears trickled down her cheek.

" And yet," said Herbert, " I have but thrown the time away in unavailing entreaties—your father remains implacably firm."

" I was sure that he would," calmly replied Fanny ; " he never refuses a boon, where his

child is concerned, without much previous deliberation, and, I am sure, without much pain ; he has our happiness, my dear Herbert, too deeply at heart, ever to deny anything which can possibly promote it ; let us therefore yield to his better judgment, nor add to his distress by any want of submission on our parts."

"Heaven forbid," replied Herbert, "that I should indulge a wish, that could militate against your future happiness ; I therefore yield to your father's will. There is, I believe, much of *possibility* in what his clearer foresight can anticipate ; but God grant it may prove otherwise, and that I may return crowned with success, and claim his best treasure as my reward ! And yet, Fanny, you may meet with many more deserving—"

"Herbert, do we not part," exclaimed Fanny, interrupting him, mutually trusted in, and trusting ? and though no promise binds us, and we are both left free to choose a more exalted sphere, should we regret the humbler one which now we love, yet I have no fears that either heart will change. Why then embitter the hope, which rests on our mutual confidence in each other, by such sad forebodings ? for unworthy of regret, will be the one who could realise them."

"Be it so," said Herbert, "and yet absence

would be less bitter, if we were only permitted to correspond. Will you never add to the value of your father's letters by a few lines from yourself?"

"From my father," replied Fanny, with a faint smile, "you will hear everything that can interest you; write to him very often, and very unreservedly, and depend upon it he will never be wanting in a parent's kindness towards us both; let that be sufficient, and for the rest let us submit."

Herbert made no reply, and after a few minutes' silence Fanny took from the table a small Bible and King's Hymns, and in giving them, said, "Keep these little volumes, dear Herbert, for my sake—in reading the one, think only of its consolations, obey only its precepts; in using the other, you may sometimes believe, that at the same moment we are addressing the same prayer for each other as for ourselves: and now, Herbert, let us part as brother from sister;" but in giving the mandate she became pale as death, and her words trembled on the lips that spoke them.

Herbert listened to her in silent admiration; but still, unwilling to obey, he retained Fanny's hand affectionately in his own, till she, suddenly

withdrawing it, -exclaimed, " Once more, dearest Herbert, farewell! and may Heaven's best blessing be with you." So saying, she immediately left the room.

Herbert looked up as if in a dream—he had heard the door close, and Fanny's light step in the room above; but all now was silent, and he had seen, perhaps, for the last time, her who had shared with him all the pleasures of his childhood. He felt desolate; but never forgetting from whence strength could be derived in every hour of weakness, he fervently implored the assistance of the Almighty to subdue every feeling that would rebel against the unerring will of Heaven, and, fortified by the prayer, he felt more resigned; and, after taking leave of Mr. Seymour, he hastily turned from St. Llenards, the peaceful scene of all his happiest hours!

CHAPTER VII.

“WHY, my dear girl,” exclaimed Caroline Herbert, one morning, on entering the little drawing-room at the Hermitage, “you will really fret yourself into the grave! One would suppose that you were preparing for a pilgrimage to Mecca, and had therefore forsworn the sight of man or womankind, lest their syren smiles should win you from your purpose, and, after all, make you love Lymington better than the Holy Land, whither your vows of penance had bound you. Ah! I knew very well how this visit to Llanvair would end—in your being moped into a very model of sinless stupidity; and in truth you only now want a long black veil, a cross on your bosom, and a cup in your hand, to personate ‘patience on a monument,’ sighing over the sinful corruption of this frail world! Well, save me from such

goodness, if religion makes every convert sit in a dark room, with a Bible in one hand and a pocket-handkerchief in the other, which I verily believe you have done ever since that precious brother of yours—Pope Perfect—sailed off to shower upon other shores the warnings and benedictions with which he used to absolve you from your daily sins.”

“ For once, Caroline,” replied Ellen, trying to look very calm, “ you may be mistaken, for this book happens to be a botanical dictionary, and I am as far from *sinless* stupidity as you are from reason ; but you must not, I assure you, take me as an example of religious happiness, which I believe you must seek at Llanvair, where you will find it in many a happy countenance, and truly see it exemplified in Fanny Seymour, who never ceases from her duty, and is therefore cheerful and light-hearted, while I —sit in a dark room, not to read my Bible, but to repine at the loss of a beloved brother, who is only gone to fulfil his duty, in obedience to the will of God.”

“ And depend upon it,” said Caroline, “ since, like a good Christian, you seek consolation in Heaven’s ways, never did Heaven do a kinder thing to you both ; for India will do Herbert as much good, as Herbert’s absence will do to you ;

since now he may chance to come back something like a human being, whereas at present he is neither one thing nor the other ; not earthly enough for man, for if he meets but a living thing, on which is stamped the crime of beauty or fashion, he flies from it as from a very basilisk ; and yet he is not quite ‘ spirit immaterial ’—for the heaven whither he would fain go before his time.”

“ Beauty may indeed be a basilisk,” replied Ellen, looking mournfully at the lovely countenance of Caroline, really wounded by her levity, “ if it thus dare to trample on the power, which has bestowed it for higher purposes than to mislead and fascinate a weak and yielding mind.”

“ Oh ! I want to trample upon nothing but melancholy, believe me, nor to mislead anything but my own dear Ellen from her dismal thoughts,” exclaimed Caroline, determined not to be angry with her friend, of whom she was resolved to make a victim, in spite of Fanny Seymour and all the pious people at Llanvair ; but come,” added she, “ do let me draw up these doleful green blinds, and prove your righteous submission to Heaven’s will by enjoying the sun which shines over you. Mamma wants you to dine with us to-day,—long sleeves and all, Ellen, if you like it ; and now you

must come with me to see that dismal being, Mrs. Howard,—a visit which you may insert in your diary as a visit of charity, as, poor soul, I assure you, she stands in need of spiritual consolation; for tears, I truly believe, have been her food night and day ever since the death of her son. Now my going to see her in the way of comfort is of no use in the world, for when she begins crying, I cannot for the life of me cry with her, nor quote scripture to enforce submission: all this you can do well, and perhaps make a convert of me into the bargain. But, dear Ellen, don't look so dreadfully serious, and then I will not laugh at you any more."

"Your laughing at me individually," said Ellen, very gravely, "can never make me feel more or less serious; but if you value your own welfare, and really wish to retain my affection, you will not thus trifle with a subject so sacred as that of religion."

"Well, don't preach," replied Caroline, "and then I will do my best to frame my conversation according to your fancy: but tell me, will you, or will you not, come out?"

"To tell you the truth," said Ellen, "I intended calling on you this morning, to ask your assistance in a little plan I wish to execute. I will

therefore now attend you where you please, if, on our return, you will follow me."

"Anywhere you like," replied Caroline, "except to church; for, as I wish to do all things in order, I leave week-day prayers for old people, and my own for Sundays."

Ellen would make no further reply, finding it only excited the careless levity of her friend; she therefore left her to prepare for going out; and feeling quite satisfied with herself in thus standing firm, in spite of Caroline's efforts to alarm her from duty, she only now wished that Miss Aubrey and Louis could witness her stability of principle, which enabled her to bear so patiently all the trials of Caroline's provoking insinuations.

On their leaving Mrs. Howard, Ellen told Caroline that she would now claim her for the next hour, if she could for once be steady for that time.

"Well, I really will," said Caroline, "for I want to see how you saints set about converting the wicked ones, as I conclude that to be your commission with me just now."

"That would be an attempt far above my powers," replied Ellen, smiling; "but I want to convert our school into something like regularity

and better order ; and now that Herbert is gone, I shall have plenty of time to attend it, if you will but second my endeavours."

"Second your endeavours for what?" asked Caroline ; "in the name of patience, my dear Ellen, what are you talking about?"

"I am sure, Caroline, you must confess that the children of this parish are sadly neglected, and it is really a reproach to us, to see the manner in which they behave at church. Now I have brought from Llanvair an excellent and very simple plan of regulating a village school ; and if you will but aid me in establishing such a one here, we shall be rendering an essential service to these poor children, at the expense of very little trouble to ourselves."

"Llanvair has certainly turned your head with its schools and schemes," replied Caroline ; "you never dreamt of these innovations before you went there, but were perfectly satisfied with papa as your pastor, and poor old Dame Coleson as presiding over the baby community at Durnford. Papa gives her thirty pounds a year, and if she did not do her duty, do you not suppose he would soon nominate a better schoolmistress? But as to both children and governess, I see nothing in either of them to shock even the fine feelings of

the renowned Miss Seymour, for I think Dame Coleson looks very respectable at the head of thirty chubby brats every Sunday, marching one by one like a little army of Lilliputian recruits."

"The outward appearance of a school," replied Ellen, with all the patience she could command, "can signify but little, comparatively with the importance of a practical knowledge of their duty. I went yesterday to hear the children read, and was really grieved to find how perfectly ignorant they were in all their catechisms, which they repeat like parrots, without the smallest idea of the purposes for which they learn them. Surely, then, ought not we, who have received the benefits of a good education, to use our talents to the glory of Him who gave them? and, by sacrificing a very small portion of our time, we might become instruments of doing essential good to these poor children."

"Really, my dear Ellen, I scarcely find time to teach myself; and as to sitting for an hour over thirty dirty children, why, I should expect to have thirty different fevers in my blood before night."

"How, then, does Mrs. Coleson escape them all?" said Ellen.

“ Oh ! because she has been bred and brought up in the midst of them all,” replied Caroline ; “ but, seriously speaking, depend upon it we should do more harm than good : I am not for equalizing the world ; let each ‘ be educated according to the sphere in which we are placed.’ ”

“ Certainly,” replied Ellen, “ in point of mental acquirement, but where Christianity is concerned, every human being stands alike accountable ; and the ignorance of the poor will be charged to those, who, being placed with means and opportunities of instructing them, neglect the sacred commission. I will willingly take upon myself the first trouble of regulating the school, if you will afterwards only assist me by taking a portion of pupils under your direction, as a clergyman’s daughter ought to do ; and, situated as we are, how can I act unless abetted by you ? ”

“ Now, Ellen,” exclaimed Caroline, laughing, “ that is Fanny Seymour’s speech verbatim. I give you all due credit for a good memory ; but preach to papa as the shepherd of your stray lambs, and I dare say he will profit by your lecture, and turn village tutor, in all proper submission to your authority. As to myself, I will give you a *carte blanche* to act in my name in converting the ignorance of these little ones to the wisdom

of your own better judgment ; but, for the rest, excuse my declining the delightful task of rearing rustic stupidity."

"Then will you only go with me," said Ellen, with a look of earnest entreaty, "for the first few weeks at least, and then I am sure that, in witnessing the advantages of duty, you will feel its importance, and it will be to you a source of pleasure?"

"For your sake, dear girl, I refuse it," replied Caroline ; "for depend upon it I should do more harm in a week by my impatience than your sanctity could rectify in a month : but here comes Frederic," exclaimed she, not a little delighted in being thus released from so irksome a subject ; "he is coming to meet us ; an act of gallantry somewhat rare with him."

Here Frederic joined them, and after a few compliments, which might either pass for egregious flattery or wilful impertinence, he asked Ellen if rosy cheeks were the fashion at Llanvair ?

"Health and happiness are so, I believe," replied Ellen, "and these may produce them."

"Then I can tell you," said Caroline, "that they are no advantages. I had no patience just now with that stupid hypocritical Mrs. Howard, for telling you how much you were improved

by your country excursion. Before you went, papa often said what a fine stylish girl you were growing, and I too began to think you would soon rival me in that delicate tint which you then had upon your cheek; but now you are so super-abundantly rosy, that you took anything but stylish or elegant."

"Then I suppose," replied Ellen, laughing, "health must be quite excluded from the circles of elegance: however, here I must say farewell," added she, turning into a path leading to the Hermitage.

"Oh, but you will dine with us to-day?" said Caroline. "I am sorry," replied Ellen, "that I must decline the pleasure, as mamma is very unwell, and therefore I could not leave her." "Then you never will," said Frederic, "for she is always ill, I think."

"I hope better things," said Ellen: "at present, however, my being at home is, I am sure, a comfort to her, and therefore farewell to both of you." So saying, she left them, and Frederic said, "Now, Caroline, do you not tremble for your two guineas? There is a month at least gone by since the wager was accepted, and yet Ellen is not a bit nearer to us as a convert."

"I repeat it still," exclaimed Caroline, "that

in twelve months from the time of her return from Llanvair, if she do not become a proselyte to a gay life, I will pay you the wager in full value at sight."

"Well, she seems very steady to her text as yet," replied Frederic.

"Oh yes!" said Caroline coolly, "religion with Ellen is like a new book; her head is full of it till another fall in her way. Mark my prophecy, that Lady Selliston will fascinate her, and turn her as a magnet would the needle of a compass; for, depend upon it, fascination is a charm which poor Ellen cannot withstand, and nothing will delight my poor aunt more than having the amusement of subduing the obstinacy of over-righteousness."

With this amiable prophecy both entered the rectory, and separated to their respective engagements, while poor Ellen was meditating at home on a far brighter futurity! Astonished at her own firmness in thus resisting the influence of Caroline, she now believed herself to be a decidedly firm character; and because she had twice refused to join in singing Italian duets* on a Sunday evening, although the most endearing entreaties had been used in urging it, she fancied herself an established Christian, who, in the midst

of evil, could persevere in well-doing. Six weeks had now elapsed since her return from Llanvair, and yet she had consistently pursued the instructions of Miss Aubrey and Mr. Seymour, without thinking duty an irksome task, or without the least desire of joining in the gayer pursuits of Durnford; "therefore," said she to herself, "there can be no fear of my again falling under the power of the world. Pleasure to me has now lost all its charms; I no longer bask in the enjoyments which it offers, no longer shrink from the reproach which in the world must ever fall on those who, clinging to higher delights, can forsake it, and resist its dangerous allurements. I no longer anticipate, as a dull and irksome duty, an evening spent in the sick room of my mother; I no longer fear to encounter the closeness of a village school-room; the very toil of teaching is now a delight to me: then are not these the fruits of religion? and, as Mr. Seymour says, the more I advance in Christianity, the more shall I delight in obedience to Him, whose ways are righteousness, and whose righteous paths are peace! then Louis* will soon return, and in two years find me all that he can wish, and, blessed as his wife, may I not be a blessing to all around me?"

Thus, alas! Ellen argued; and always too con-

fident in herself, ever trusting too much in her own strength, she perverted the very means of doing good into a snare for falling short of goodness ; she forgot how deceitful is the human heart—how difficult to know oneself!—how hard a struggle to subdue these rebellious feelings of human nature which war against the soul. She forgot that of ourselves we can do no good thing, and that all our own works, unless they be the fruits of obedience and of faith, can do little towards Christianity. Thus she mistook the shadow of religion for its substance, and in clinging too securely to the one, she lost the other, and all her boasting became in vain ! She had indeed for six weeks fulfilled to the utmost her promised obedience, but she forgot that Louis had only left her three weeks, and her brother as many days. Under their influence she had therefore escaped that of another ! Thus she believed, that she had been sufficiently tried to feel secure of now standing alone, and because she loved the novelty of duties which perhaps, pleased more in the associations attached to them, than in their actual performance, she believed that she had attained the very spirit of true religion : however, she made many resolutions of adhering to them, and, thus satisfied, she went to pass the remainder of the

day with her mother, who, pleased with the attention, and cheerful exertions of her daughter to amuse her, began to think that, after all, Ellen was improved, 'although a little too methodistical. They spoke much of Louis, and of their future prospects as connected with him. He had, immediately on his return from Llanvair, declared to Mrs. Irwyn his attachment to Ellen, and at the same time, most honourably entered into all the conditions on which only he could hope to claim so dear a tie. To these both mother and daughter had acceded, so that he was engaged to Ellen, conditionally that he could obtain the consent of General de Rancy; although he made no doubt of winning the compliance of his father to his wishes, provided that Ellen would not object to reside in Switzerland. Animated with these hopes, he had left England, happier than he had been for some months; and, under the assurance that she now would be all he could wish, he formed a bright vision for the future. They were to correspond during his absence, unless his father adhered to his objection to such a connexion, in which case their engagement was immediately to be at an end, and Louis under the promise of never again attempting either to see, or to write to Ellen. Thus were both still under some anxiety, which,

together with the conviction, that much depended upon her own steadiness of character, tended in a great measure to preserve Ellen in her wish of doing well. Although Caroline refused to assist her, she resolutely undertook the charge of the village school, and for some weeks she attended it most punctually, without thinking the task a very heavy one ; but at length, as winter advanced, she began to find excuses for neglecting it ; the weather was either too cold or too damp ; the children, too, whom she had expected would, under her tuition, become in a few weeks models of order, regularity, and learning, were still as noisy, as stupid, and as ignorant as ever. This disheartened her ; and as her efforts gradually weakened, she endeavoured to plead, as an excuse for her own want of perseverance, the impossibility of doing any good, where, so far from being assisted,—children, governess, Caroline Herbert, and the season,—all militated against her exertions to promote general comfort and benefit. By degrees, too, her interest in the Scriptures decreased. Scott was neglected ; and although whenever she saw it lying uselessly upon her table, she thought of Mr. Seymour, and determined to be more assiduous in studying it, yet something occurred every day to protract the fulfilment of her inten-

tion. The season would not now admit of her reading in her own room, and she did not like to do so in the sitting-room, because it would give an appearance to others of professing the outward forms of devotion, and thus only expose it to ridicule, or perhaps aversion : but the summer would soon come, and then she would commence with fresh zeal all those duties which had been neglected from circumstances, not from dislike. Yet whenever she received letters from Miss Aubrey, Louis, or Mr. Seymour, in which were constantly repeated the most affectionate solicitude for her eternal interests, and the warmest encouragements to pursue the duties of Christianity with all the zeal of a consistent and aspiring Christian,—when they urged her to pray, to persevere, and to seek strength from that heavenly Spirit, promised to all those who, by fervent prayer, should ask it in the Redeemer's name,—and in close dependence on the grace of God,—then, indeed, she would think how little she was obeying their precepts, and would recal those wilful omissions of duty which she had resolved so strenuously to fulfil. And then again, she would renew her resolutions of amendment ; and for a few days acting diligently upon them, would rest satisfied in being still a religious character. But, alas !—swayed

by the influence of Caroline, all the precepts of her friends, and all the promises of her own deceiving heart, passed away "like the loveliness of a song," whose sweetness died when the sound was heard no more, till at last, lulled by the religion of taste, with all its "lofty accompaniments," the "religion of conscience" was allowed to sleep, and Ellen no longer listened to the voice which still called her to "repent and live."

Caroline lost no time in introducing her to Lady Selliston, to whom she had given the outline of Ellen's character, regretting that such a nice clever girl should be lost in the obscurity of "humble duties," and challenged her aunt to make a proselyte of her, and, if possible, redeem to the world a jewel which might, with a little polish, add to the lustre of its circles. The fact was, that, to Caroline, Ellen was of considerable advantage, No one could so well "*set off*" her own singing, for, as a second was her forte, Ellen's sweet voice as treble always added to the harmony, without overpowering the fine full notes of her friend. No one so well understood the touch of music when required as an accompaniment to the harp: others would allow such force to the piano, that poor Caroline's gentler cadences were lost in the deep tones of an opened pedalled

bass ; whereas Ellen, in modulating the one, only added sweetness to the expression of the other, and left free power for the delicate execution of Caroline. Besides all this, she was useful as a companion. Not beautiful enough to be her rival, yet sufficiently elegant to do credit as her associate—too unsuspicious to be clear-sighted, and too generous to be designing,—she was the very one, above all others, to answer the purposes of a confidante. For these considerations alone was Caroline still anxious to retain full power over her, and therefore professed to act in all things towards her, only from “sincere affection,” well knowing how much ascendancy affection could obtain, and thus, when she found how much the influence of her more valuable friends had changed the bias of her mind, she resolved to leave no arts untried to subdue the principles they had instilled, and to renew all her former love of the world. For this, she well knew that in Lady Selliston she would find a powerful agent, and therefore determined to interest her in the noble cause of poor Ellen’s downfall ; nor could it have fallen into more successful hands, for she was one to whom nature had given the most unbounded power of fascination.

She had been left a young and beautiful widow

by the death of Lord Selliston, who bequeathed to her a large fortune, to be enjoyed at will during her lifetime, conditionally that she did not form another matrimonial connexion, or ~~the~~ whole of it was to devolve on a distant branch of the family. She had long held the reign of fashion and pre-eminence; but she found that with her youth her consequence decreased: she was no longer the centre of attraction; and although enough of beauty still remained to claim general admiration, it was no longer the resistless magnet of unrivalled power. She therefore thought of seeking another expedient, still to retain the empire which she felt so unwilling to relinquish. She had heard much of Caroline's beauty, and determined to leave London for a twelvemonth to settle near her brother, and if she found that the reports of her niece's charms had not been exaggerated, she would then offer to introduce her to a more exalted sphere, and in the mean time, till she was old enough for such an introduction, she would model her to her own purpose, and rub off every little awkwardness which might be expected in a country clergyman's daughter. With these views, she took Chilwood Park, near Durnford, where she retired on the plea of delicate health, and the desire of renewing an intimacy with the Herberts.

In Caroline she was not disappointed, and was now schooling her to all the essentials of high life, that, as soon as she attained the age of eighteen, she might take her to town, and, on the plea of advancing her welfare, renew her former influence in the world. Chilwood Park became the scene of continual festivity ; dances, balls, and plays followed in rapid succession, that, under the name of mere " baby amusements," Caroline might be gradually initiated in all the fatigues of future dissipation ; while Lady Selliston, as the generous advocate of so much pleasure, became the theme of universal praise, and enjoyed, though to a more limited extent than she had done in higher circles, the power of pre-eminent attraction. She had been led to expect much in Ellen, nevertheless was surprised on finding her so superior in manners and address to what might have been anticipated in a mere country girl. Ellen had frequently met her at Durnford, and could, after seeing her, seldom think of anything but of Caroline's interesting, lovely aunt. Yet she had for a long time resolutely declined joining in the gaieties of Chilwood ; but at last consented to pass a week there, assured that it should be quite in a social way, with no one but Caroline. She accordingly went, but resolved that she would

not accept a second invitation—that to this there could be no “great objection,” as a refusal would certainly appear a very ungrateful return for the marked kindness which she had received from her ladyship. Lady Selliston had not been so long trained to the world, not to understand completely the *tact* of every character; she had studied Ellen’s, and determined to act accordingly, that she might be unwarily allured—not forced—to yield to the fascination of a gay career. She saw that she was proof against personal flattery, but that the flattery of endearment could win her to love any one who would judiciously bestow it. Endearment then was the weapon with which she resolved to destroy the guileless mind of her young victim; and now that she was actually under her roof, she offered the most unremitting attentions, and declared that as her sweet little Ellen, was not sufficiently robust to bear the late hours and fatigues of a masquerade, she would defer having one till she had left her. Thus, in offering apologies for Ellen’s refusing to join them, she never would pretend to understand that religious feelings had anything to do with the objections of such assemblies; and that she might obtain a more effectual sway over such “strict and prejudiced principles,” she never touched on the subject

of religion, and even cautioned Caroline against ever making it again the theme of either ridicule or argument. But, while her ladyship always spoke to Ellen in the most affectionate language, she took care frequently to speak *at* her ; yet this was done with so much art, that Ellen was perfectly unsuspecting of her real intentions. Thus would she often censure the "*fashion*" of young ladies interfering with village schools, and the low-minded taste of finding pleasure in associating with poor people, going to listen to all their gossip and village scandal on the pretence of visiting the sick, which must, at best, be very prejudicial to the health of those unaccustomed to such close rooms. Ellen wanted courage to argue against such sophistry, or to venture a reply, though silently she often thought of Fanny Seymour's happiness in the midst of such "low-minded pleasures." One Sunday evening, Lady Selliston entered upon the subject of music, and related an anecdote of "certain young ladies" in town, who would never play and sing on a Sunday. "Of course," said her ladyship, "they are, very deservedly, quite the theme of ridicule amongst all the young men, and their affectation of religion only exposes them to tenfold observation ; but some people like to be singular, and to be thought

singularly good, and, in refusing a most innocent recreation, would set themselves up for very standards of perfection, and everybody else down for very sinners, as if no one could go to heaven but themselves. Oh! I've no patience with your elect! the very subject makes me angry; so do, dear little Ellen," added she, throwing her arm affectionately round her waist, "put me in good humour again with your sweet syren voice. 'Come, take the harp, and let me lose all thoughts of ill in hearing thee!' Go, Caroline, open the piano, and uncover the harp, for there is something so exquisitely touching in Ellen's voice, that I always feel at peace with myself and all the world when I hear it." Caroline obeyed her aunt without making any remark, and poor Ellen, inwardly wishing to refuse, still suffered Lady Selliston to lead her to the instrument without resistance. She determined, however, that nothing should induce her to sing any other than sacred music, and was just going to ask for one of Kelly's hymns, when Caroline placed before her, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" Ellen's unsuspecting heart immediately construed the action into extreme delicacy on the part of her friend towards her, and, taking her hand, said with the most expressive smile, "This shall

never be forgotten.” Caroline made no reply, but received from her aunt a very significant nod of approbation, while she, for whose ruin it was designed, unconsciously began the “soul-inspiring song;” and impressed with the incidents which led to it, and with the sense of her own weakness, she sang, though with less power, with more feeling and pathos, than she had ever done before. At the conclusion, she arose, still agitated, and with tearful eyes; but Lady Selliston, not choosing to relinquish so favourable an opportunity, pretended to attribute them to excess of sensibility, excited by the words of that “divine piece,” and after complimenting her on her performance, said, with a most fascinating entreaty, “My dear love, I will not ask for any more of Handel; your spirits are not yet strong enough for such sublime melody, but pray oblige me by one more song, my favourite, ‘Al desio;’ it will put us all in spirits again.” Ellen declared her inability to comply; but added, that she would willingly sing a hymn. This was said with considerable effort, which was not lost upon her ladyship, who replied, “Well, I will not press you to anything requiring so much exertion, therefore we will set aside Italian for this evening; but as you are not one of those young ladies who pretend

to the affectation of over-sanctity, I know my sweet Ellen will kindly oblige me by one little duet, in which you and Caroline certainly shine—that lovely air, ‘All that’s bright must fade.’” Caroline remained perfectly silent, and Ellen, hesitating as to how she could possibly escape, only blushed deeply, and attempted to move from the instrument. “Come, girls,” said Lady Selliston, “you need not, I think, now assume shyness before me; Ellen, love, do tune the harp, it is better adapted for that style of melody than the piano, and we may well close this day with harmony, for it has been one of duty, as I believe we have all been to church with willing hearts. By-the-bye, Caroline, I never heard your father preach a more excellent sermon. Come, Ellen, strike the harp for ‘All that’s bright,’ and then we will go to bed.” Ellen would gladly have been in bed at that moment, or anywhere, safely out of the path of temptation, which, strong as she fancied herself, she was too weak to withstand. Poor Ellen! she who had boasted of her stability, and had felt so secure of preserving good in the midst of evil!—she, to whom the world possessed no charms, no power to allure from the path of duty!—now wanted courage to refuse an act of absolute disobedience to the command of her God!—now wanted

strength to resist the fatal influence of an artful, worldly-minded woman !

Caroline was first to obey the request, and taking the harp, called Ellen to accompany her, who thus was completely drawn into, the very sin her heart abhorred !—and why ?—because afraid to meet the reproof of religion, of which but a few weeks before she had made her boast, and in which she believed she could have even gloried, if exposed to the trial !

She went to bed restless and uneasy :—she thought of Miss Aubrey, of Louis, and of Mr. Seymour. Oh ! what would they have thought of her, could they have witnessed her sinful weakness on that evening ! and yet it had been called a “ well-spent sabbath !”

“ And how far has even Caroline been my superior this day,” thought Ellen ; “ she who errs from the ignorance of a mistaken and pernicious education, yet how kindly considerate was she, in even aiding me to avert the evil which still I would not resist ! Kind-hearted girl ! with all her faults, how far more generous has she been towards my failings than I have been to her,—how delicately did she shield me from the ridicule of her aunt ; she was silent where she knew my opinions differed, and, I believe, has never spoken of me but with

affection ; yet I have exposed *her* character, and have even suffered the censure of my own transgressions to fall upon her name ! but I will better return her friendship ; I will love her more gratefully, nor longer be ashamed to acknowledge her friendship as a privilege and delight."

With these thoughts, Ellen determined to return home on the morrow. "And then," thought she, "I shall soon go again to Llanvair, and henceforth I am *determined* to do my duty. Lady Selliston is truly a sweet woman, and much to be pitied in having had so false an education ; but I must not love her, since her friendship will only prove a dangerous fascination to one so weak, so easily misled !"

The morrow came, but Lady Selliston would not hear of Ellen's leaving her that day, as she expected a few friends in the evening, and could not possibly spare the "very charm of her party"—she promised faithfully, however, that on Tuesday she would send her home without any further solicitation. Comforted with this assurance, Ellen consented to remain, and when evening came, she was so much the object of attention and admiration, that she soon entered into the very spirit of pleasure, and was the "gayest of the gay."

The ensuing morning she returned, but alas! she returned no more to duty!—She began to think that religious people were perhaps sometimes led to be illiberal, for Lady Selliston was certainly, though a thoughtless woman, kind to every one, and wished to promote general happiness; she was only her *own* enemy!—certainly not deserving of such indiscriminate censure.

Caroline, too, was a sweet-tempered girl, only volatile from being too much flattered, and too fond of pleasure from being so early accustomed to enjoy it.

But spring now advanced, and Mr. Seymour did not forget his promise of receiving Ellen for the summer; and as he had lately thought her letters manifested something of their former spirit of the world, he was the more anxious to save her, if possible, from its influence; he had therefore written in terms of earnest entreaty to Mrs. Irwyn, for Ellen to pass the ensuing twelvemonth with them, as she might travel safely under the protection of Miss Aubrey; but Mrs. Irwyn felt her health so much declining, that she could not consent to their wishes, and in such circumstances no further solicitation could, of course, be offered. She was aware, however, that such a refusal must be a great disappointment to her child, and as a

reward for her bearing it so cheerfully, she promised that she would allow of her being often at Chilwood, the distance being so trifling that she could at any time send for her in a few hours, should she become worse during her absence. Thus Ellen was again thrown constantly with Caroline; and Lady Selliston, who really became fond of her, and gratified by her influence, spared no means to please and to entice her. She loaded her with presents and every indulgence; a continued kindness which soon won both the affection and gratitude of Ellen, to whom such ties were always binding.

Summer too advanced, the season in which so many duties were to have been assiduously fulfilled—but, alas! all seemed forgotten in the career of pleasure into which Ellen had entered. The school was never thought of; that sacred book—the “Messenger of Heaven’s counsels”—was laid by, and all its solemn precepts totally neglected!—Even Mr. Seymour’s letters afforded her but little pleasure, and to answer them had become an irksome task. Fanny was too prosy, and her “best friend,” Miss Aubrey, too strict! Louis alone retained his accustomed empire in her heart: his letters, indeed, were often illiberal towards Caroline,—too suspicious towards herself; but

still, as these errors might be traced entirely to feelings of affection and solicitude, they only produced in her mind the wish of overruling such prejudices: consequently, she wrote always in terms of devoted attachment and gratitude, but her letters were, alas! too much filled with Caroline Herbert—the generous kindness of Lady Selliston—and the delightful, innocent pleasures of Chilwood Park,—to satisfy or please the reader's heart! Herbert, too, that once dear brother, was now scarcely regretted: his letters, indeed, were always received with feelings of joy, as announcing his safety and continued happiness, but in other respects they were unheeded, or thrown by for a “more convenient season.”

How could so total a change have been effected in less than a twelvemonth! Why was that heart, which at Llanvair; but a few months before, was so affectionate, penitent, and humble—now so hardened,—so lost to feeling,—so dead in every transgression of wilful disobedience!—alas! because that heart had rested securely in its *own* strength—had neglected to improve the means of offered salvation,—had renounced the only power which can bless our endeavours with success! He who alone can make duty our delight, and lead us into the paths of peace—was now forsaken, and

all His precepts forgotten! His warnings were rejected—His blessings were perverted! Where, then, could Ellen find a hand to guide,—a pilot to direct,—an anchor to uphold *her* amidst the dangers of temptation?—She *had* voluntarily—nay, obstinately, sought the precipice, on the brink of which she now stood; and relying with fearless confidence on her own stability, in preserving the path of safety—she fell!—and into that deep labyrinth, whence, alas! retreat is almost impossible—the ascent so steep—so marked with wretchedness!

Lady Selliston was not a little proud of having gained such a proselyte; and one day, when expatiating to Mrs. Irwyn, in most exaggerated language, on the universal admiration which Ellen excited in the fashionable world, she said that she hoped she might be permitted to claim the “little darling” as her *protégée* for the ensuing year; that early in the spring she intended returning to town, for the purpose of introducing Caroline, and much wished, that her dear Ellen might also share the same advantages; and further requested, that the consideration of expense might be no plea against her consent, as, rather than relinquish so great a pleasure, she must be allowed to stand answerable for every charge on Ellen’s account

during her stay in town. To this Mrs. Irwyn alleged the same excuses, of her own ill health, as she had offered in her refusal to the Seymours ; “ And,” added she, “ should I get better, I have promised that Ellen should pass the ensuing year at Llanvair : all other engagements must of course be declined.”

“ Well, my dear madam,” replied her ladyship, “ Ellen’s welfare being my only object in this request, no selfish consideration could induce me to advance any objection to her yielding my own solicitations to those of her country friends. I know nothing of Mr. Seymour, and make no doubt that they are all very good people ; but I confess, that I do lament that so lovely a girl should be sacrificed to the narrow prejudices, which she must unavoidably imbibe in such a circle as that at Llanvair,—prejudices, indeed, of which she is but just free, and which must, in the world, ever militate against her forming that connexion to which her talents and superior mind may so justly entitle her.”

“ In that respect,” said Mrs. Irwyn, “ you know her prospects are, I believe, settled ; as your ladyship is no stranger to the situation in which she stands in regard to Captain de Rancy, of whom I have, and very deservedly, so high an opinion,

that in every respect I think it a most desirable connexion."

"O yes," coolly replied her ladyship "I am perfectly aware of that circumstance, and have heard much in Captain de Rancy's praise, who, in this part of the world, is considered as quite an Adonis; but still it appears to me a very uncertain event, and the attachment altogether a romantic one. However, I can certainly have no wish of seeing it dissolved, if indeed their happiness rests upon its issue; but dearly as I love your sweet girl, I own I view it with regret, for I cannot bear the thought of such a jewel being thrown away upon a foreigner—to be lost amid the valleys of Switzerland!"

"My own life," replied Mrs. Irwyn, with a deep sigh, "is so precarious, that I have ever left Ellen, and still do so, at liberty to decide her own fate; but, in leaving her an orphan, I confess that I should feel satisfied, in knowing her connected with a family so nearly allied to mine as the De Rancys are, and therefore earnestly hope that their present engagement may be fulfilled, although there are, I fear, many chances against it, —as I know General de Rancy is too prejudiced a man, easily to be biassed by the wishes of another."

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed Lady Selliston, “ and that is one reason, why I so much regret the probability of Ellen being thrown into a family where she will be,—if not despised,—never appreciated as she deserves, and ought to be. Nevertheless, my dear madam, of course I can have no right to interfere in your family prospects ; but as, at all events, a year in town will be of considerable advantage to my little favourite, I hope she will be enabled to leave you with comfort, and join our party in the spring.”

“ Your wish is most flattering to my child,” said Mrs. Irwyn, “ and should I be sufficiently well to spare her, on her own will shall rest the decision ; in the meantime she is at your command, as far as my consent is concerned.”

“ I thank you sincerely, my dear madam,” replied her ladyship, taking Mrs. Irwyn’s hand ; “ to part with such a companion even for a day must, I am sure, be a great sacrifice on your part. As for the rest, I can only hope my wishes will be fulfilled—and then, as my sweet Ellen’s prospects are so uncertain, in case of any disappointment respecting Captain de Rancy, her mind, being amused by the constant routine of a London life,—so new to her,—will not be so likely to dwell on the regrets which such circumstances might

for a time excite ; and then she will be on the very spot to choose a more advantageous alliance. Farewell, then, my dear Mrs. Irwyn. I can only repeat that I can have no motive in what I urge, but the welfare of your interesting child, for whom, believe me, I shall ever retain the warmest affection ; and if at any time I can be of the slightest use to her, never hesitate in applying to me as to her most zealous friend.”

To these gracious promises and disinterested offers, Mrs. Irwyn returned all due thanks ; and Lady Selliston took her leave, not a little pleased in possessing so much influence where her own interests required it.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER spring had now returned, and the last fête was preparing at Chilwood Park previously to the departure of Lady Selliston. It was to celebrate the eighteenth anniversary of Caroline's birth, and as Ellen was so nearly of the same age, the two friends were to share the honours of that day. Lady Selliston had vainly endeavoured to effect a masquerade, so many parents of the young people objecting to their children taking part in such an entertainment : a characterade was therefore substituted, and many a young heart was now full of anxiety as to what dress and character would be most appropriate for them to assume. Only a fortnight remained, and Lady Selliston declared that it was high time the plan of the entertainment should be finally arranged : and as she resolved that there should be

some display of fancy, to make up for the disappointment of masks, she invited a certain number of young ladies to pass the ensuing fortnight with her, that something of a pantomimic exhibition might be produced. But without Ellen nothing could be done; she must therefore come without delay, and accordingly the carriage was ordered, and Caroline despatched with the summons from Lady Selliston.

She found Ellen unusually grave, who, on receiving the invitation, only replied that she dared not accept it, and that she must even relinquish the prospect of sharing that happy day—her mother having received letters on business of urgent importance, which called her to Hereford, whither she must of course accompany her.

“To Hereford!” exclaimed Caroline; “what in the name of patience calls Mrs. Irwyn there, above all places in the world? However, you need not, I suppose, be tied to her apron-string all the days of your life; surely you can stay with my aunt during your mother’s absence, for indeed she cannot just now do without you.”

“Your aunt is always kind to me,” replied Ellen, sorrowfully; “but I could not see mamma go alone in her present health; and indeed, when I told her so, she seemed to think it a thing of

course ; I dare not therefore even hint an objection."

" Oh ! if that be all," exclaimed Caroline, " you are mine—only let me go up stairs. and I will soon obviate all difficulty." So saying, she flew up stairs—Ellen vainly endeavouring to withhold her. She found Mrs. Irwyn busily arranging papers, and thought within herself that wonders would never cease, on seeing her so engaged : however, she took no notice of so unusual an exertion ; but going up to her, she said, " I am quite glad to see you looking so much better, my dear Mrs. Irwyn ; but I find that you are going to leave us, just at a time when we are most in want of you."

" So far do I feel from being better," replied Mrs. Irwyn, looking really ill, " that I dread a journey for which at present I am wholly unequal. Business, not pleasure, calls me away, and my going admits of no delay."

" Well, but at all events you must not think of going till after my birthday, for you know it is the last which will be celebrated ; and I should not enjoy it half so much without the presence of my earliest friend," said Caroline, taking Mrs. Irwyn's hand, with a *profession* of the utmost affection.

“Thank you, Caroline,” replied Mrs. Irwyn; “but long before that time, I hope to be in Hereford, where I shall probably be detained a month.”

“Well, this is as provoking as unexpected,” said Caroline, sighing; “however, of course, you will not take Ellen with you, and my aunt wishes her to remain at Chilwood till after the birthday, if you have no objection to her returning with me now.”

“Ellen’s head has lately been so completely full of Chilwood—of its gay parties and of dress,” replied Mrs. Irwyn, “that her going with me will probably afford me but little comfort; she is seldom now the companion of her sick mother, nor do I wish to make her so against her will,—she may therefore do as she likes.”

At this moment Ellen entered the room, anxious to hear the result of Caroline’s embassy. Her mother’s serious countenance foreboded little success; but Caroline, looking pleased, exclaimed, “Well, Ellen, as your going to Hereford is immaterial, you are to choose your head-quarters during Mrs. Irwyn’s absence. Chilwood, of course, will receive the preference.”

“But should you not like me to go with you, mamma?” said Ellen timidly, half ashamed of the question.

“Of course,” replied Mrs. Irwyn ; “ my errand to Hereford being so far from a pleasant one, to have a companion and sharer in my anxieties would mitigate their weight ; but I can have no wish of retaining you from those pleasures, for which you so willingly resign a daughter’s duty : but the fault, perhaps, is mine,—I have given no charms to your home ; therefore go, Ellen, and let your choice be perfectly unbiassed by my wish.”

There was a tone of kindness in every word which Mrs. Irwyn had now uttered, so perfectly unlike the fretful and ungenerous disapprobation with which she generally repulsed even the better feelings of her child, that Ellen was instantly touched by such an appeal, and throwing her arms around her mother, she exclaimed, “ Oh ! mamma, if you had ever before told me, that *I* could mitigate your anxieties,—that *my* being with you could make you happier, a palace would have possessed no charms to draw me from my home ; but I thought you never cared about me,—were never pleased with my endeavours to amuse and cheer you ; but, dear mamma, I will go with you : and if you will only tell me that you love me, as Mr. Seymour loves *his* child, devotedness to you would be no less my pleasure than my duty.”

Mrs. Irwyn did not repulse, though she scarcely returned, the embrace of her child, but simply replied, "If I have not the spirits of Mr. Seymour, to express the same lively feelings of parental affection, it is, that I have not his blessings to excite them; *he* has all that can gladden life, while mine is bereaved of every joy. You, Ellen, are the only treasure spared me, and yet you are scarcely a comfort to me."

"Because, mamma, I thought that you would never receive comfort from my hands,—you appeared always to reject, rather than accept my attentions; and if I offered endearment, it seemed to annoy, rather than gratify you;—but take me to Hereford, let me be your nurse, your comfort, your treasure; and you will find how fondly I can return a mother's love."

Any feeling was easily excited in Ellen, but none so easily as that of gratitude. She now saw in her mother a new creature, and in her affection she instantly sought a new tie. She kissed her a thousand times, tears rolling down her cheek; then turning to Caroline, with a cheerful voice, she for once firmly declined going to Chilwood.

Mrs. Irwyn had been that morning particularly excited by letters of an unexpected nature from Mr. Morris, her former banker, whose failure in-

volving her property, had obliged her to quit Berwyns. These letters seemed to offer a hope that some part of that property might be reclaimed ; but as it would be necessary that she should sign certain bonds and certificates, her presence was required at Hereford. Mr. Morris, in stating this, kindly offered to receive herself and daughter at his own house, for so long a time as her stay would be necessary. This had occasioned an exertion quite new to Mrs. Irwyn ; and in looking over papers which would be required to prove her claims, ten thousand recollections of former days had been awakened, and under these, her feelings had received an impulse of parental tenderness. She believed herself to be daily sinking into the grave ; and now that a little exertion on her part might ensure some future provision for her child, she thought of Ellen, and of the destitute situation in which she would be left after her death, in case General de Rancy still refused his consent to her alliance with his son. It was then, too, that her past neglect of her children crossed her mind. Conscience told her that if Ellen was disobedient and unkind, her own hand had blighted the buds of filial affection. Thus was the mother now left to lament the delinquency of her child, and that child to seek from strangers the sweet tie which

home had long denied her. And thus, alas ! will every bond of earth be dissolved, which is not linked by the hallowed tie of christian love ; for it is the Spirit of God that can alone ensure the happiness of even nature's dearest connexions. Whether it be mother to child, sister to sister, friend to friend ;—if the sacred bond be wanting or broken, which alone can permanently unite us together, every affection must weaken ; our fold be divided,—and our dearest ties be at best precarious.

But Mrs. Irwyn had neglected the spiritual welfare of her children, believing that they might choose the way to heaven most pleasing to themselves ; and found, too late, that, neglecting the only way appointed in the gospel for our guide, she had herself gone astray ; her own heart therefore,—not a hard fate,—was now, in fact, the source of her most painful disappointments.

These reflections had been passing in her mind, when Caroline entered the room, and the bitterness they had awakened was scarcely subdued, when Ellen again roused the latent anguish of self-reproach. She then expressed the feelings with which her heart was full ; her child was touched by them,—had promised all that could satisfy the parent,—had granted all that she could have

asked ; but the exertion over,—her wishes obtained,—Mrs. Irwyn again relaxed into her usual tone of discontent.

Ellen returned to her mother's room, determined cheerfully to assist in the preparations for the journey ; but, in spite of every effort to amuse and please her, Mrs. Irwyn's brow was again clouded, and her smiles were gone.

Ellen talked, in all her sprightliness of fancy, of the property likely to be reclaimed, the delight of again possessing Berwyns, and of the happy changes which another week might effect ; but she was scarcely heard or heeded, and if her mother spoke it was only to give—not directions, but commands. All this did but renew the reserve on one side, and discontent on the other ; and though Ellen went to bed satisfied with herself for having yielded to her mother's wishes, rather than to the entreaties of Caroline, she, alas ! almost regretted the sacrifice ; so little was duty the lasting principle of action with that self-willed girl.

Caroline, vexed at being frustrated in her errand to the Hermitage, returned to Chilwood full of spleen against Mrs. Irwyn, and determined, if possible, to persuade her aunt to overrule Ellen's sudden fit of filial obedience. Lady Selliston

accordingly promised to go early the next morning, resolved to conquer every objection made by mother and daughter, against her retaining Ellen as long as her own convenience might require it. Unfortunately, armed with all the powers of a very Calypso, she reached the Hermitage just as Ellen and her mother had been arguing upon some trifling disagreement about Herbert ; so that Ellen was now little disposed to resist the entreaties of Lady Selliston, whose voice she no sooner heard, than she ran forward to receive her caresses. She guessed the purport of her visit ; then again the jubilee, with all its anticipated delights, arose to her imagination ; and the “ still small voice ” of conscience which whispered its holy warning, was stifled by the syren voice of pleasure, which now, alas ! called her,—ah ! little did she think so,—to a destiny of endless self-reproach !

Mrs. Irwyn silently listened to the arguments alleged against the necessity of taking Ellen on a journey, which was merely one of business ; and still leaving Ellen free to choose her path, she remained as if perfectly indifferent to the decision. Lady Selliston saw how much depended on her own perseverance, and finding that Ellen wavered, became the more eloquent in her cause ; till Ellen

was at last persuaded that “really her going to Hereford was very unimportant, as she could be of no use in the midst of lawyers and law-papers, and that Russell, as being more accustomed to her mother’s ways, would be of greater comfort and assistance.” She consented at last to accompany Lady Selliston, and, after a few arrangements which this sudden change of plan required, she took a hasty leave of her mother, assuring her that if her stay were prolonged, she would cheerfully join her in a few weeks.

Mrs. Irwyn, who had shown no signs of disapprobation, seemed perfectly satisfied with this plan; but as Lady Selliston returned once more to say farewell, a tear glistened in the mother’s eye, though the feeling perhaps was transient which had called it there; but, unknown to Ellen, it died unheeded by the cold heart to which it had appealed.

No sooner had Ellen reached Chilwood, than she felt dissatisfied under the consciousness of her own weak and sinful desertion of duty. She longed to return home, and choose a better part—but it was too late; and vainly endeavouring to banish the reproach of her heart, she sat down, bitterly lamenting the instability of her own principles. “Oh!” said she, “why am I always

thus the creature of ungoverned feelings? Acting from the impulse of momentary passion, I am ever the victim of passing influence; and, heedless of reason's better dictates, I run from happiness and from peace." These salutary reflections were, however, interrupted by the entrance of Caroline and Lady Selliston: she followed them down stairs, and every painful remembrance was soon lost in the anticipations of the approaching jubilee.

The plan of the pantomime was placed before her, and her imagination soon caught the vivid colouring of Lady Selliston's ingenious fancy, for a representation of the Seasons. Caroline was to personate Night, as the dress appropriated to the character of Luna was considered so peculiarly advantageous to her figure and complexion. It was composed of a black velvet tunic, bordered with crystal stars, the sleeves of which were looped upon the shoulder with brilliants: a diamond crescent confined the knot of her plaited hair, and a bandeau of the same jewels sparkled on her fair forehead. The dress of Ellen, as Aurora, was as much as possible in contrast. A silver gauze tunic, ornamented with a wreath of palest roses, so intermixed with small crystals as to appear studded with dew-drops. Her head was encircled

by a bandeau of pearls,—pearls also looping up her sleeves. These were the most prominent characters, and a certain number of young ladies were to take parts with each, as planets, satellites, and hours. These being selected from a list most likely to do credit to their respective characters, invitations were immediately despatched to them; and in a few days Chilwood Park was filled with young girls, fancy milliners, painters, and workmen of every description, and the whole house soon converted into fairy-land.

The morning previous to the birthday, Lady Selliston came to Caroline with a countenance of unusual consternation, and exclaimed, “ Only think how provoking! here is a packet containing letters from Russell, for Ellen and myself, to say, that as Mrs. Irwyn is extremely ill, Ellen must go to Hereford without delay, and that a servant will be at Warminster to-morrow to meet her. What is to be done! for we shall never find another Aurora; besides, there is no time now for any alteration.”

“ Oh! her going is out of the question,” replied Caroline, “ for, without her, our evening will now be quite spoiled. Not one of those Italian duets will I sing with any one else, and who could take her place in the waltz and allemande,

which will be the principal display? What nonsense, to be sure! it is only one of Mrs. Irwyn's nervous whims, so why say anything about it to Ellen?—We can always deny having received the packet; and if Mrs. Irwyn gets worse, she will soon send off another despatch, which will signify little after the dance."

"I fancy," said her ladyship, "that the poor woman is really ill, as Russell says she has two physicians to attend her; however, we all know that Mrs. Irwyn is easily frightened; so I may just set aside my letters till after to-morrow; for, as you say, one day can make no great difference; but we must keep our own counsel, and say nothing to Ellen till after the dance, and then I will give her the information as if it were just received."

This was accordingly agreed, and Lady Selliston, happy in having so "famously settled the matter," renewed all her toils as directress of the festive scene.

That morning's post also brought Ellen a letter from Miss Aubrey. Once, O how eagerly would she have received it!—but something of shame now came across her, as she felt how little she deserved such a remembrance; and almost dreading its contents, conscious of meriting only reproach,

she left it some time unopened. When she had finished her work, however, she retired to her room, and taking her letter, read as follows :

“ MY DEAR ELLEN,

“ I cannot leave Ashfield, where I have been passing the last week with Mrs. Warton, without writing a few lines to apologise for my apparent neglect in not having called on you, which I fully intended doing previously to my quitting this neighbourhood ; for although my society would probably have been only an interruption to those pursuits in which you have engaged, with an avidity I should once have believed impossible, yet the interest I must ever feel where you are concerned would have induced my meeting the risk of an unwelcome reception. I am, however, obliged to give up all hope of seeing you, being unexpectedly called to Llanvair, where I am going in a few days, and shall be happy to convey any letters from you.

“ Many inquiries will, I am sure, be made by those kind friends so deeply interested in your welfare. I wish, Ellen, that you could empower me to communicate,—what would give us all so much pleasure to hear,—that you were advancing in a course of Christianity, delighting more and

more in all the duties attached to it. But, alas ! what can I now say, if I take report as my authority ? — that Ellen is ‘ devoted to pleasure, admired by the world, and the flattered favourite of Lady Selliston.’ Such praise, I fear, will give little pleasure to those who, unaccustomed to the parade of worldly display, will consider them only as sad tokens of a dissipated mind. Oh ! Ellen, what volumes might be said on the dangers into which you have thrown yourself ! Yet are you sure that you can so resist their fascinations, as still conscientiously to discharge those duties, to which, as a responsible being, you are bound by the most solemn obligations ? Or do you rest contented in the neglect of these, defying the authority of the Most High ? I do not intend unkindly to reproach you, my poor Ellen : the truth rests between God and your own conscience ; but let me solemnly urge you to beware of the influence of dissipation, lest you sow for yourself a harvest of unspeakable misery and remorse ! Forgive my saying so much. I could not address one whom I have loved so sincerely, without intruding upon you an affectionate warning, which nothing but my anxiety to see you *happy*, in the highest sense of the word, could perhaps excuse. I need not say how much we all regret that we hear so sel-

dom from you ; but I fear we must expect no amendment while more pleasurable engagements so fully occupy your time. I will therefore only now add, that should you at some future period stand in need of any kindness within my power to manifest, you may rely upon my unfailing desire to serve you.

“ Dear Fanny is quite well, always happy in the discharge of her duty ; and I rejoice to hear good accounts of your excellent brother. I find from Lady Warton that he is now an interpreter of Oriental languages, which has given him a considerable advantage, and that he has also undertaken the Missionary cause with great success. What a blessing is this, Ellen, to all who love him ! Fanny tells me that poor Susan Elliott is at last released ; her sufferings were very great, but she patiently supported them, and died full of hope, in the assurance of a glorious resurrection, through the merits of her Redeemer.

“ Mrs. Warton unites in kind regards to you, my dear Ellen ; and with the same sentiments I remain yours very affectionately,

“ AGNES AUBREY.”

Every remembrance of Llanvair was powerfully awakened by this letter, and Ellen sighed as she

thought of those friends whose affection she had so justly forfeited by her neglect. "Fanny may well be happy," said she within herself; "and I too was happy at Llanvair, but none of them love me now; and yet Miss Aubrey little knows how often I am wretched in the midst of all this parade of pleasure! It will, however, soon be over, and then I will retrieve the past. I wish I had gone to Hereford with mamma, but it is useless wishing anything now." Tears filled her eyes; for, dissatisfied with herself, she was unhappy, and vainly did she struggle against the conviction of conscience. She resolved to write immediately to Miss Aubrey and Fanny, to solicit a renewal of their affection, and to promise amendment; but scarcely had she purposed doing so, when Caroline called her away, and long before the post hour arrived, Miss Aubrey and Fanny, her good resolutions, and the letters, were altogether forgotten.

The happy day now arrived, and, after an early dinner, Lady Selliston began the important business of dressing, first herself, and then her young partisans. Spring with its flowers, Summer with its fruits, Autumn with its coronet of wheat, and Winter bound in silver chains, frosted over to represent ice, formed fanciful contrasts.

Lady Selliston, having attired her "little fairies," as she styled them, seemed quite delighted with this display of her own fancy, but looking for Ellen, was surprised to find her in the hands of a servant, who loudly declared that "Miss Irwyn had quite spoilt her beautiful dress by such old-maidish whims." Lady Selliston sprang forward to learn the cause of this sudden ejaculation, and found that Ellen would not submit to the indelicacy of such "*very* short sleeves." Lady Selliston, really vexed, declared that she would rather dress a thousand such as Caroline, than one so provokingly perverse as Ellen, and was warmly contesting the point with her, when the bell rang which was to summon Night and Morning, planets, stars, hours, and seasons to their respective stations. "There!" exclaimed her ladyship, "you, whom I dressed the first, are now the last to be ready; provoking girl! but you shall not," added she, hastily looping up the sleeves, "muffle yourself up as if on a journey to Lapland!—but come, we have not another moment to lose."

Ellen cast another look upon the glass to see if she could really venture to display such a dress. She certainly never looked so well, and as Caroline was not ashamed of *her* white arms, which

were even more indelicately exposed than her own, she silently followed Lady Selliston to the saloon prepared for the magic scene. The guests were all arrived, and, as Jews, Turks, Grecians, flower-girls, and fortune-tellers, had now filled the rooms. The pantomime then opened, and being concluded by the meeting of Night and Morning in the waltz and allemande, the performers mingled with the other guests in the midst of general applause. Joy seemed to be the common feeling: the young people were animated, and the old were happy in witnessing the mirth of others. The dancing now commenced, and George Melford, a young and dissipated college companion of Frederic's, who had long considered himself as a favourite with Caroline, claimed her for his first partner. Frederic next led Ellen, but while Caroline was debating about her choice of quadrilles, Frederic turned to Ellen, and said, "I suppose you have seen your cousin?"

"Cousin!" exclaimed Ellen, "what cousin?"

"Louis de Rancy," replied Frederic, coolly; "he dined with us to-day, and came here, as I thought, to see you, but it seems that was a secondary purpose."

"And is he in this very house?" asked Ellen, faintly.

“ He was in this very room, not half an hour ago,” replied Frederic, “ but I fancy he preferred the real, to the ideal heaven ; for as soon as you plaything opened,” added he, pointing contemptuously to the saloon, “ he was off, and as I thought he looked somewhat like Banquo’s ghost, I followed the restless spirit, and found him star-gazing in the corridor ; he complained that the heat of this room, together with the fatigue of a long journey, had rather wearied soul and body, so I left him to recruit both, in the pure atmosphere of a March midnight.”

Frederic, who always delighted in teasing Ellen, whenever he could so retaliate her known dislike to him, would probably have prolonged the subject in sharper insinuations, had she not, pale as death, entreated him to lead her away. He took her to the nearest seat, and, sorry for the evident emotion which he had thus wantonly excited, forbore further remark ; for, though he was a dissipated character, he was not void of the milk of human kindness.

The dance was now waiting for them, and Lady Selliston, coming forward to inquire the cause of such delay, desired Frederic to take another partner, and then asked Ellen what ailed her.

“ Oh ! take me out of this room,” said Ellen ;

“do take me away, for waltzing has made me so sick and giddy, that indeed I cannot dance any more.”

“Do not say that, my love,” replied her ladyship; “air and some lavender drops will soon restore you both to spirits and to pleasure; I fear that you have exerted yourself too much—but come with me; you will, I dare say, soon be well again.” So saying, she led her up stairs, and when they were alone, Ellen exclaimed, “Do let me go to bed, for indeed I feel very ill. O! what will Louis say to me?—what will he think of me?”

This exclamation solved the problem of her indisposition; but Lady Selliston, assured that Louis could know nothing of Mrs. Irwyn’s illness, was relieved in believing herself secure on that subject. She therefore endeavoured to soothe her young charge, and replied, “What will he think of you?—why, only that he never saw you look so well; therefore pray keep up your spirits, for these pale cheeks do not at all accord with the rosy smiles of Morning. It was, however,” added she, feigning to misunderstand the feelings which had been excited, “very inconsiderate of Captain de Raney to give you so sudden a surprise; for, agreeable

as it may be, your spirits are not strong enough to be so trifled with."

"Oh!" exclaimed the self-accused girl, "it is I only, who am inconsiderate;—but I am always weak, sinfully weak."

Lady Selliston, dreading the result of any further self-examination, pretended not to understand the nature of these reproaches, and therefore changing the subject, she said, "Come, love, your cousin is, I fancy, in the dancing-room, and, I dare say, anxiously awaiting you; so let me bathe your eyes with rose-water, and then I will resign you to his charge for the remainder of the evening. Seriously, however," continued her ladyship, in a tone of slight displeasure, "I entreat you for *my* sake now to exert yourself, for remember that I have lavished much trouble and expense in securing for you a happy evening."

This appeal to Ellen's gratitude had all its desired effect; she felt how much was due from her to her benefactress, as she blindly called her false friend; and though she felt wholly unequal to support the part assigned her, after some effort to assume a more cheerful countenance, she followed Lady Selliston, and again joined the "motley crew."

Louis was, indeed, amongst them, but being in earnest conversation with Caroline, at the upper end of the room, he did not observe Ellen's return. "And does she really know that Mrs. Irwyn is ill?" anxiously inquired he.

"As to that," replied Caroline, "she is always ill, and if Ellen fretted at every little nervous fit, she would soon be as bad as her mother. Mrs. Irwyn complained of being unwell before she went."

"But I understood," said Louis, "that letters had arrived express from Hereford, to inform Ellen of her mother's dangerous relapse, and to request her immediate attendance there."

"O yes," replied Caroline, carelessly, "I believe there was a letter came this morning to that purpose, but I really know nothing about it, only that we all thought it would be absurd in Ellen to go away till after the dance, as one day could make no great difference."

Louis made no other reply than a deep sigh, but thought within himself, "Can this really be the same Ellen, who, at Llanvair, but a few months ago, delighted in soothing the lonely hours of a poor cottager, and who now can mingle with a scene like this, when her mother may be suffering the

last agonies of death?—O where will my delusion end!”

The black picture still filled his imagination, when Lady Sellston, gently tapping his shoulder, recalled him to the reality before him ; he started, but did not reject the hand of Ellen, as her ladyship placed it on his arm, gaily bidding him to take charge of her little sensitive. She then left them, and Louis silently led Ellen to a seat, where they might be least likely to excite observation. Neither spoke for some minutes, when Louis at last ventured to express his surprise on finding her there. “ For,” said he, “ I expected to hear of your being at Hereford with your sick mother.”

Ellen blushed deeply as she replied, “ My mother went there merely on business ; my going with her, therefore, seemed unnecessary.”

“ But is she not very ill ?” said Louis.

“ She is certainly far from being well,” replied Ellen ; “ but you know she is always more or less an invalid, and I trust change of scene will be of benefit to her.”

Louis, who conceived this to be a mere prevarication, and said under the same feeling with which Caroline had supposed that “ a day would

make no difference," although a mother's life was in the question, exclaimed with some severity, "Poor Mrs. Irwyn!—were Herbert in England, she would not be so deserted."

Ellen truly felt how just was that reproach, and yet she little thought under what suspicions it was given; her own conscience severely accused her, but she could now ill bear the accusations of another; she knew that they were just, but she thought a generous heart would not have added to the sufficient agony of self-reproach;—she therefore sat sullenly silent. Frederic at that moment came up to her, and taking her hand, said, "Come, Ellen, the Spanish dance is called for, in which you are engaged to me. I am not going to be put off by another fainting fit, so come along; for as Louis does not seem to be in a dancing mood, he can have no objection to your choosing another partner."

Ellen withdrew her hand, assuring him that she could not dance any more; upon which another appeal was made to Louis, who only replied haughtily, "Miss Irwyn, I should suppose, is entirely guided by her own wishes,—mine can have no influence over her in any way." So saying, he arose; but had he possessed the spells of a magician, he could not have so changed Ellen, as by

the bitterness of that last look. One kind word would totally have subdued the pride which rebelled against her better self, but that unexpected reproach again roused every angry feeling, and gave an energy which reason in vain had endeavoured to supply. She gave her hand to Frederic, and as a new creature, she now smiled, danced, and waltzed, with all the spirits of a light heart; her countenance became animated and her cheek flushed; but, alas! it was the flush of angry passion, and, while she was inwardly wretched, she seemed the gayest and happiest of the party.

Louis gave one last look, as Ellen mingled with the dancers, and then hastily left the room. He ordered his horse, and turned to the deserted Hermitage, where he knew that he might still command a bed.

His ride was but a melancholy one; the moon shining in majestic grandeur, surrounded by ten thousand stars, recalled to his mind the mimic scene which he had so lately left. He could not but compare it with that now before him, and as he did so, he said within himself, "Earth in vain aspires to catch the semblance of heaven, and human beings to wear the garb of purity!—Earth, and earthly things are still deceitful, and he that clings to them for happiness, must be taught

how fallacious is the hope which rests on anything so frail. How unlike is that chaste moon to her, who in its representation disguised a heart so selfish and so vain ; and poor Ellen, to the sweet morning whose peace she could so ill assume ! Such is the difference between heaven—the reality of joy—and earth with all its visionary dreams ! *There* only can goodness dwell unmixed with sin ; while here, our dearest hopes are blighted by disappointment !” With these reflections he reached the Hermitage, and having learnt all the particulars of Mrs. Irwyn’s illness, he called for pen and ink, and retired to his room.

Morning found Ellen feverish and wretched. Fatigued from the exertions of the preceding day, and miserable in the remembrance of its events, she had passed hours of painful suspense. She knew that she had seriously wounded Louis, and that nothing could vindicate her desertion of her mother. He was always disgusted by anything like exhibition in a female ; and as she remembered this, and thought of the disgraceful dress in which he had just seen her, she believed that she had irrevocably offended him.

Scarcely had she finished dressing, when Lady Selliston entered the room with a countenance of feigned distress, and giving Ellen a packet, which

she said had just arrived from Hereford, consoled with her on its contents, regretting that she must so soon be deprived of her little favourite.

Ellen scarcely heeded these flattering compliments, but, making no reply, she calmly read Russell's letter, in which she was directed to take a servant with her as far as Warminster, where another would be in readiness to accompany her the remainder of the journey, that no delay might prevent her reaching Hereford as soon as possible, Mrs. Irwyn being considered in some danger.

Lady Selliston, who had prophesied to Caroline that of course she must submit to witness a fine scene of hysterics and fainting, was surprised in seeing Ellen so calm. She was pale as death, and her lips trembled as she endeavoured to speak with assumed composure; but no tears followed, scarcely a sigh was excited, though, had Lady Selliston better understood the real feelings of the human heart, under the impression of such deep sorrow, she would have known it to be the calmness,—not of apathy,—but of despair. Ellen, however, now felt the necessity of immediate exertion, and therefore patiently followed Lady Selliston to the breakfast-room. Caroline, untouched by the affliction of her friend, merely expressed herself vexed by her unwelcome summons;

and concluding her condolences by saying that she made no doubt Mrs. Irwyn would soon recover, she began her criticisms on the persons and the dresses of those, who had assembled there the preceding night. George Melford seemed to be in all her thoughts. His waltzing, his dancing, and his singing, were themes of endless encomiums; and she declared, "that he was by far the most handsome in the room, although Louis de Rancy was there." Ellen tasted but a very small portion of her breakfast, and then retired to prepare for her melancholy journey, without a wish of hearing the further discussion of her heartless friend. With a heavy heart and bitter reflections, she began the necessary preparations, when the servant brought her a letter, which had just been left by a messenger from the Hermitage, saying that it required no answer. Ellen felt immediately relieved when she saw that it came from Louis, as she hoped it might lead to a reconciliation; but she forgot that although duty is easily neglected, its neglect cannot so soon be forgiven, nor so easily atoned, which the following letter but too truly proved.

"It would be impossible, and perhaps needless for me, my dear Ellen, to describe the anguish

with which the unexpected events of last night have filled my heart ; —events which at once throw such a gloom over the whole future of my destiny on earth, that you must forgive me, if led to speak too bitterly of a disappointment in which you may find it difficult to sympathise. It is not, however, to make any appeal to your feelings, that I now address you ; but as our mutual happiness,—if alas ! I can here use that word !—requires an immediate decision, I will not delay the painful task of now, and *for ever*, resigning the claim you had bestowed, and of releasing you from an engagement, which, I am sure, can only be most unwelcome to you, since the contrast of our pursuits, and views of happiness, are too great, ever to unite us with any prospect of comfort. This is indeed a painful conviction, the more so, as it now stands the sole, but fatal barrier, to the consummation of those hopes which I have cherished with such delusive security ! I do not reproach you, Ellen ; I can have no right to interfere with the line of happiness you have chosen. Your own heart guided you to the preference of dissipation,—be it so ;—but it renders our views of life so widely different, that different, too, must lie our future destinies. Oh ! Ellen, in what bright dreams have I revelled ! When absent

from you by country and by distance, I have recalled the pleasant hours of our Llanvair visit, where last I left you all that the most sanguine wishes for you could desire ; and assured, that the want of stability, which we once regretted in you, was but the natural effect of peculiar circumstances, I rested confidently on the hope of finding you, on my return, a character such as in a wife I might have revered and almost idolised. To such a union my dear father could no longer refuse a free consent, claiming only the condition, that our residence should generally be in Switzerland. But, alas ! reports reached him that you were daily becoming more and more a votary of fashion and dissipation ; and painfully aware how little such tastes could give promise of domestic happiness, he became alarmed, and required of me an immediate renunciation of an engagement to which he had given consent under such different auspices. Scorning to credit reports so injurious to you, but anxious to remove their impression from my father's mind, I solicited leave of absence, that I might contradict every such aspersion against you, by the evidence of my own senses ; at the same time, fearlessly granting to my father a most solemn promise, that should I, indeed, find in you the altered

being he had reason to fear, I would at once, and for ever, renounce a claim involving misery for each party concerned. With all the anxiety of such an errand, I arrived last night, and I need not, cannot dwell upon its events. They proved but too well the fatal truth. Not only did I find the mind of Ellen enslaved by the flattery it once abhorred, but her heart dead even to the feelings of filial—nay of human tenderness; for while the mother was vainly calling for her child to soothe the last hours of life, *that child*—mingled in the revelries of dissipation, unchecked even by the remembrance of a parent's suffering!

“ Farewell then, Ellen. On earth we meet no more!—I dare not wrong the confidence, which my dear father so unhesitatingly reposed in my honour, by any further hope upon the result of time; neither will I weaken my own resolution by dwelling on the pain it necessarily inflicts upon a heart, which has, alas! so faithfully, so tenderly depended upon *you* for its happiness. Yet never can that heart cease to pray for you—to think of you, and may I say—to *love* you! Then forgive me, Ellen, if, in closing this last communication, I venture to intrude upon you, one affectionate and parting exhortation;—that as you value the blessing of God, and the very salvation of your soul,

break through those chains of misery, which, under the name of *pleasure*, have enthralled and led you far from the path of peace. Return while time is yet your own, return to Him who still is waiting to be gracious, cast yourself upon His mercy, and seek of Him those more exalted pleasures, which alone can bring blessedness on earth, and lead to everlasting bliss in heaven.

“ That these may be your portion, is the affectionate and earnest prayer of, dear Ellen, your deeply afflicted, but very sincere friend,

“ LOUIS DE RANCY.”

Poor Ellen little expected this last trial ; and overcome by such complicated misery, she sobbed as if her heart would break. She felt that the punishment was just, though heavy had it fallen. She had deserted her duty,—had yielded to the obstinacy of an ungoverned spirit, and she knew that the past could admit of no reparation ; but to lose the esteem of one, to whom she had long looked up, as the arbiter of her happiness, was more than she could bear. “ Yet,” thought she, “ bad as I am, he even thinks me worse. Well might he turn from me, disgusted by the heartless levity of which he believed me guilty ! His love

is lost, but I will not sink so deeply in his esteem ; —he shall at least know, that I was ignorant of my mother's illness. Dear, dear mamma—Heaven grant that her life be spared, and then, although my heart be broken, it shall henceforth be devoted to her and to my duty !”

She then wrote to Louis, assuring him of her total ignorance respecting her mother's illness, confessed herself unworthy of his continued affection, and concluded by entreating that, in writing to Herbert, he would, as far as possible, consistently with the justice due to himself, palliate her conduct, that he might be spared the anguish it must inflict, and then bade farewell for ever ! She offered no vindication of her conduct, made no profession of intended amendment : too much humbled under the sense of her aggravated weakness, she now patiently submitted to its consequences. Having concluded her letter, she sent a messenger immediately to the Hermitage, and desired that her servant would attend her without delay. This done, she felt her mind relieved, and now prepared for her journey : she took the borrowed pearls with which she had been ornamented, and went to return them to Lady Selliston. Caroline, who was sitting with her, arose as Ellen entered, and bade her be comforted, as no doubt

her mother would soon be well. To this she made no reply, but only asked Lady Selliston if, on the preceding day, she had received any intimation of Mrs. Irwyn's illness. • Her ladyship, confused by the unexpected question, blushed, but made no answer, when Ellen turned to Caroline and said, "Did Louis say nothing of it to you, during the conversation in which I saw you engaged?"

"He said something about it," replied Caroline; "but I told him, that knowing your mother to be soon frightened, we had all agreed that your going till after the dance was quite unnecessary."

"When did that packet arrive then?" said Ellen, assured that some deception had been practised towards her.

"Oh! it came yesterday morning," replied Lady Selliston, finding that further disguise was useless; "but indeed, my love, in consideration to your feelings, I determined to conceal its contents till after the dance, unwilling to spoil the pleasure of your evening."

"Pleasure indeed!"—exclaimed Ellen, as the whole truth flashed across her mind; "but did you not tell Louis," added she, addressing herself to Caroline, "that I knew nothing of this sad summons?"

"How could I enter into long discussions in a ball-room?" replied the designing girl; "I told him, we all thought that one day could make no great difference in your journey, and I am sure I forget what further excuses I made."

Ellen, unable to support herself, sank on a chair, and in a tone of the deepest agony exclaimed, "Oh! what endless wretchedness has that day of pleasure cost me, which was anticipated with such impatient delight!—Little did I think, when the delusive picture hung before me, what a dreadful perspective it concealed; but I deserve every punishment, and God in His justice now leaves me to the bitterness of remorse."

Lady Selliston was alarmed by the look of pale despair with which this was spoken, and endeavoured, by the fondest endearments, to soothe her unhappy victim. But all now were useless and unheeded, for Ellen only saw in Lady Selliston, the author of her present distress.

The servant who was to accompany her to Warminster soon arrived with a postchaise. She returned to her young mistress the letter she had sent to Louis, telling her that he had left Lynton early that morning, nor did she know whither he was gone.

Lady Selliston, who thought Ellen very unfit

for the journey, urged her to wait another day ; but Ellen, anxious to leave a scene of so much misery, exclaimed, “ Oh no, I have delayed but too long ; not another hour will I remain.” So saying, she took a hasty leave of Lady Selliston and Caroline, and drove from Chilwood, bitterly lamenting that she had ever been tempted to enter it.

CHAPTER IX.

It was nearly dark when Ellen and her attendant reached Hereford. On alighting at the humble lodging of her mother, she sprang forward, and, without noticing Russell, she ran up the narrow staircase, wildly exclaiming, "Oh! where is mamma? 'I will—I must see her.'" The door of a small sitting-room opened, and Mr. Seymour gently taking Ellen's hand, led her in, and bade her be composed.

The surprise and shame of meeting one whom she had so ungratefully neglected, recalled her to herself; and hiding her face with both her hands, she said, "Oh! Mr. Seymour, spare me from reproach, I could not bear it now—but do take me to dear mamma; I am very, very wretched, and yet I will not cry—and if she sleeps, indeed I will not wake her."

Mr. Seymour was sincerely touched by her dis-

tress ; and knowing how largely he must yet add to her cup of sorrow, he replied, with a tone of deep compassion, " She is not asleep, my poor Ellen ; but be composed, and presently you shall see her."

" Yes, yes," she exclaimed, " I am composed ;" then looking up suspiciously, as if she dreaded further inquiry, she added, " Oh ! Mr. Seymour, my earliest, best friend, do not tell me that mamma is dead ! She must live to forgive me, for I cannot bear this agony of remorse."

" Your mother still lives, although scarcely sensible, dearest Ellen," soothingly replied Mr. Seymour ; but if you would seek the forgiveness of your Heavenly Father, prove the strength of your repentance, by submitting patiently to His will, whether the issue terminate in life or death."

" Then she is not *really* dead," said Ellen, " and I may yet receive her blessing and forgiveness. Oh ! Mr. Seymour, lead me to her this moment, and bid her live to bless me !—Surely she will know her child, and speak to her poor Ellen one word of kindness, for I cannot support this dreadful dispensation."

" It is a great trial," replied Mr. Seymour, scarcely knowing how to soothe the wretched

girl, "but do not call it dreadful—rather let us turn to our God in prayer, that it may be made one of mercy to you."

"Oh! there can be no mercy for me," exclaimed Ellen, in a tone of despair; "I am too sinful to deserve it!—but talk not now of comfort;—take me to mamma,—living or lifeless, I *will* see her."

Mr. Seymour endeavoured to dissuade her from so doing, till she was a little more composed. Finding, however, that all resistance was unavailing, he led her to the sick room, entreating her to command herself, for the sake of her mother; but when she saw the senseless form of her, from whom she had parted so unkindly, all the bitterness of self-reproach returned, and, falling on the bed, she gave way to all the violence of unsubdued grief.

Mrs. Irwyn, who had been for some hours in a state of insensibility, was suddenly roused by the sobbing of her child; and looking wildly round her, she asked, who it was that thus disturbed the bed of death?

It was enough that Ellen heard her mother's voice, and raising herself with the energy of anxious, agonising hope, she caught the cold hand of her expiring parent, and exclaimed, "Dearest mamma,

it is I—don't you know your child—your own poor Ellen?—Oh! do not spurn her from you,—look at her once again,—speak, if only one word more!”

Mrs. Irwyn spoke not—but, looking earnestly at Ellen, faintly smiled, while a tear glistened in her languid eye, as it again closed to insensibility.

Ellen pressed her parent's hand more closely to her bosom, as if fearful that the vital spark should expire, ere she could once more arouse her to a sense of outward things, and then exclaimed, with an imploring voice, “Mother!—my own dearest mother, have pity on me, for my heart will break!—do but tell me that you forgive me, for indeed I did not know how ill you were.”

Mrs. Irwyn, again starting from her lethargy, fixed her eyes upon the countenance of Ellen, although scarcely sensible of the appeal which had thus roused her; and, unconscious of anything to forgive, she faintly said, “I thought you would come to me, my darling Ellen,—I knew you would, for you are very, very affectionate;” then raising her head from the pillow, and laying it on the bosom of her child, she looked up,—she smiled, and faintly blessing her, she expired without a struggle!

Ellen for some moments hung over the corpse of her mother in speechless agony ; then throwing her arms around her neck, she sobbed as if, indeed, her young " heart would break." Mr. Seymour allowed her undisturbed indulgence ; he hailed those tears, bitter as they were, as a relief which despair had long denied her ; but at length, alarmed by the vehemence of her grief, he carried her out of the room, and desired Russell to put her in bed, while he went for medical assistance.

Faintings and hysterics rapidly succeeded, and when Mr. Hervey arrived, he found her in high delirium. The usual remedies were, however, applied, and in a few hours she became more calm. Mr. Seymour, assured that every relief had been administered, left her to the care of Russell and the woman of the house, and retired to his own room to pray for the unhappy girl, and to seek support for himself in the strength of God.

Mrs. Irwyn had suffered much from the fatigue of her journey, and on her arrival at Hereford complained of being so unwell that she preferred taking a lodging, rather than accept the offer of Mr. and Mrs. Morris to make their house her abode. Russell often entreated that she would send for advice, but she always replied that it was useless, her hour being at hand. Such language

was, however, so common with her, that Russell would scarcely have heeded the presentiment, had not an evident alteration in her mistress alarmed her ; she requested permission to send for Ellen, but Mrs. Irwyn always answered, “ No, let Miss Ellen enjoy herself now,—she cannot do so long.”

In a few days she declared herself better, scarcely complained of anything, and exerted herself more than usual ; but still she evidently declined, would take no food, and became extremely restless. Mrs. Morris, alarmed by this account from Russell, at length persuaded Mrs. Irwyn to see Mr. Hervey, whose opinion did but strengthen their anxiety ; and the following day she became so much worse that Mr. Hervey begged to have the advice of a physician, who immediately on seeing his patient declared her to be in imminent danger. An express was without delay sent off to Ellen, the result of which has been already related. One was also forwarded to Mr. Seymour, whom Russell had mentioned as the most intimate friend of the family, entreating him to come without delay to Hereford ; as, in case of Mrs. Irwyn's death, no one could give directions respecting her affairs,—and what was to become of Ellen ? Such an appeal was never made in vain to the benevolent heart of

Mr. Seymour; he left Llanvair immediately, and reached Hereford two days previously to Mrs. Irwyn's death. Nor could she have been consigned to a more able and judicious friend: firm in all the duties of a minister, he gently soothed her mind, while he earnestly endeavoured to lead her to the sinner's Friend. Pleased by his attention in coming, she expressed herself more than usually grateful for his anxiety in her welfare; but appeared scarcely pained by the absence of Ellen, and only twice mentioned her name,—once to ask when she was expected, and then to request that Mr. Seymour would befriend her. In moments of delirium, she wildly implored forgiveness, and spoke of her doubts respecting the world to come in awful exclamations; but at other times she listened anxiously to the mild and holy persuasions of Mr. Seymour, expressed a deep sense of her unworthiness, bewailing her past indifference to spiritual things with an earnestness which left no doubt of her sincerity, and, after uniting in prayer with Mr. Seymour for pardon and salvation, she meekly received the sacrament, and soon afterwards sank into the unconscious lethargy of expiring nature, a few hours only before the arrival of her child.

Thus Mrs. Irwyn died, as all must die who live

not a life of practical faith, afraid to hope—yet hoping to be saved! To such, death is indeed a “dark valley,” shadowed by many a doubt, which troubles not the soul that has earlier committed itself to the influence of Divine grace, in humble but assured faith that to live in Christ is peace, to “die in Him is gain!” But judgment against man is not for man to exercise. We know little of the illimitable mercy and power of Him, to whom alone such judgment is committed; nor of the mighty workings of the Spirit with spirit, even at the eleventh hour! but we *do know*, because the word of God declares it, that it is a fearful risk to delay the work of obedience and repentance, which, if rejected when offered, may be refused when sought for, with that mild but awful reproof, “*I know you not.*”

Mr. Seymour had already heard the cause of Ellen's delay, Louis having written to him before he left the Hermitage, telling him all that had passed, and entreating that he would palliate the conduct of Ellen to her mother, as much as possible, though it must for ever prevent further communication between her family and himself. He had heard of Mrs. Irwyn's illness through an officer, who had dined at Chilwood the day preceding the dance, and to whom Lady Sellistou

had "confided the secret" Concluding, therefore, that Ellen must have left Lymington, Louis hastened to Dr. Herbert's, that he might learn all the particulars respecting her ; but when he found that she was still at Lady Selliston's, and that Dr. Herbert knew nothing of Mrs. Irwyn's illness, he made no doubt that the report was without foundation, and therefore consented to accompany him to Chilwood, although little disposed to mix in so gay a scene. His surprise on finding Ellen as Aurora has been already related, and the report of Mrs. Irwyn's situation was fully corroborated in a letter from Russell to the servant, received that night, entreating her to accompany her young mistress without delay, and mentioning also that Mr. Seymour had been sent for, and was hourly expected. On hearing this, Louis was convinced that all his hopes of Ellen were at an end ; he wrote immediately to her, and leaving the Hermitage, he proceeded direct to Portsmouth, where he embarked in the earliest packet for the Continent.

Mr. Seymour had intended that Ellen should proceed without delay to Llanvair, as her remaining at Hereford was unnecessary, and would only prolong her suffering ; but when he found that she was too ill to be removed, he wrote to Fanny,

requesting that she would immediately join them, as she might afford comfort to her unhappy friend. This he mentioned to Ellen, supposing that it would give her pleasure ; but nothing could exceed the violence of her temper on hearing it ; she declared herself unworthy to see Fanny,—that she would die rather than submit to the shame of meeting her, and that she never would go again to Llanvair.

“ And where then will you go,” said Mr. Seymour, endeavouring to persuade, rather than oppose ; “ where will you find a home so congenial to a sick mind ; or friends so desirous of restoring peace to you, as at Llanvair ? ”

“ Oh ! I know,” replied Ellen, “ that I have no home, but I will go to Lady Selliston ; she wishes to have me, and I am fit only to be with her ; and then, when my heart is more chastened, I will return to the happiness and peace of Llanvair.”

“ My poor Ellen,” mildly replied Mr. Seymour, “ and is it in the midst of a dissipated world that you are likely to find a balm to heal the wound which it has already inflicted ? Will gaiety bestow the peace you seek ? ”

“ Gaiety ! ” exclaimed Ellen, “ do you suppose that such as I can ever again be gay ? No ; but

it will be a fit punishment to live in the midst of that which I abhor."

"So you would finish the draught, the taste of which has so nearly poisoned you! Ellen, believe me, the penance of self-inflicted punishment can avail you nothing; leave it to the will of Him whom you have offended, and submit, with grateful resignation, to bear whatever He may decree."

"Well, then, I will go and live in some lone place, where, sequestered from the world and all I love, I may expiate my past offences—a solitary unknown being."

"And where then will you find the means of doing so?" asked Mr. Seymour; "strangers will not feed and clothe you, and yet you cannot starve."

"That which supported my poor mother will more than supply me," replied Ellen.

"Your mother's affairs are left in so unsettled a state," said Mr. Seymour, patiently endeavouring to reason with the self-willed girl, "that a very small provision is all that you can now depend on; but it will be amply sufficient to answer your claims, if you be not too proud to accept a home at St. Llenards."

"Never will I be supported," replied Ellen, haughtily, "by those whom, in my prosperity, I

neglected. I will go to Lady Selliston, and be her companion,—her servant,—anything but a dependent.”

Vainly did Mr. Seymour endeavour to argue against such reasoning, and as easily might he have calmed the ocean as Ellen's proud spirit. He felt assured that Lady Selliston would not receive a child of affliction ; nevertheless, in compliance with Ellen's request, he wrote to ask if she might join her in town for a few months. To this, in the course of a few days, he received the following reply :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I am indeed truly grieved to hear of the melancholy situation in which my interesting little Ellen is now left, and would not have delayed so long replying to your obliging letter, had not private afflictions rendered me incapable of attending to any matters of business. I am much flattered by the preference Ellen gives to my home, and she knows me too well to doubt my cordially receiving her, did not present circumstances compel me altogether to decline her kind offer of passing a few months with me. I therefore presume to advise her going to Llanvair, until she can meet with some situation less dependent,

which I will endeavour to procure her amongst my friends in town, should she wish to accept one. Pray tell her this, and say that I should write to her ; but, that my spirits are really unequal at present to offer condolence on so distressing an event.

“ A dreadful calamity has completely upset us all, in which I know dear Ellen will sincerely sympathise. The report may probably have reached you, that Miss Herbert was shortly to be married to the Marquis of Clonnard ; an alliance, of course, to which we looked forward with the utmost satisfaction ; but judge of our consternation on finding, a few mornings since, that she had actually eloped with that puppy young Melford, whom, on inquiry, we find to be only the son of a rich *grocer* ! You may imagine the grief which this wretched girl has occasioned her afflicted parents ; my poor brother is quite overwhelmed, and Mrs. Herbert has been delirious ever since. As to myself, I can neither eat nor sleep, so affected am I by the disgrace of such an alliance, and the ingratitude of that girl, with whom I had taken such unbounded pains, and lavished so much expense, that she might be fitted for that sphere of life to which her beauty and descent entitled her. I do not, under all these

circumstances, intend returning to town, but shall go to Paris as soon as my spirits will bear the fatigue of travelling; and pass a few years on the continent; for I really cannot support the constant ennui of Dr. and Mrs. Herbert's endless wailings.

“ Thus will dear Ellen see the distressing necessity of my resigning the pleasure of seeing her; but assured that she will meet with every kindness at Llanvair, I am quite happy in knowing her under the protection of such kind friends. I beg to add my love and best wishes to the sweet little mourner, and respectfully remain,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

“ CAROLINE SELLISTON.”

Mr. Seymour had not anticipated much kindness from Lady Selliston, but he could not have believed any one capable of writing so heartless a rejection of an appeal, calculated, at least, to excite feelings of deep compassion. However, as he thought it useless to disguise it from Ellen, he gave her the letter, merely preparing her for its contents by saying, “ The world, you will see, my dear Ellen, wears a mask to please us in days of prosperity, but it flies off at the touch of

affliction ; and they who once flattered, soon desert us, to learn too late the hypocrisy with which we have been ensnared."

Ellen flushed with angry pride as she perused the unexpected refusal ; and returning it indignantly to Mr. Seymour, she exclaimed, " Lady Selliston's opinion of my Llanvair friends has somewhat changed, since she persuaded my poor mother that they would only make me a melancholy methodist ! but I shall take care never again to intrude, either myself or my sorrows, on her attention." Then, after a few minutes' silence, she added, with a deep sigh, " Poor Caroline ! no wonder that *she* has fallen, for she had no friend to guide, and every temptation to betray her. Oh ! Mr. Seymour, experience is indeed a hard lesson, when taught by the treachery of the world. I loved Lady Selliston as my kindest, dearest friend ; but ah ! how deceitful, how fatal has been her friendship ! It has robbed me of a mother's last blessing, the affection of Louis, the esteem of all my best friends, and, above all, my peace of mind. Yet I dare not reproach her, since it was my own weakness that, in yielding to her influence, betrayed me to this endless misery : but to be now deserted by that very woman, for whom I left duty and every happiness, is almost more than

I can bear. O, how can human beings thus trifle with each other's peace?"

"It is thus, Ellen," replied Mr. Seymour, "that, even in afflictive dispensations, the long-suffering goodness of our heavenly Father manifests the power of redeeming grace towards us, converting evil into blessing. Placed in a world which we have made one of sin, we have yet the means of salvation to guide us in a path of safety. Regardless of the warning, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand,'—'My spirit shall not always strive with man,'—we still rebel against the will of God, and cling to the evils of which we have been warned. God in His mercy, therefore, leaves the sting of sin, to wound the heart which cherished it, that punished in the anguish it inflicts we may learn to hate it, and so be driven to that fountain, whose streams are powerful to heal and purify; while He from whom it springs will in 'no wise cast out' the trembling leper, who seeks of Him 'living water.' Ellen, long did the voice of a patient God, vouchsafe to call you to Himself and peace; but you rejected the appeal, and now the sword of retribution has fallen, but fallen in pity, not in anger. Make it not then a sword of fire, by rebelling against its justice. Humbly bend to its stroke, and return

to the Lord your God, for he will have mercy, and abundantly pardon you ; begin a new life, since his grace now offers to renew your heart ; and then, my dear Ellen, this day of suffering may for ever be remembered with gratitude, as the first of your conversion.[†]

“ Oh ! but I can now deserve no such mercy,” said Ellen mournfully ; “ God is not to be so mocked ; for how often have I promised to become better, but am now more sinful than ever ; too truly, of myself, I can do nothing that is right.”

“ And that, Ellen, is the most powerful appeal you could offer for the assistance of divine grace. Hitherto you have trusted in your *own* strength—have relied on the sufficiency of your own righteousness. It was there, your heart most fatally deceived you. We can, indeed, do nothing well-pleasing to Him, who is too pure to behold iniquity ; another spirit then must dwell within us, ere righteousness can take root in our souls. Do you not remember the words which you have read with me from Bishop Horne,—that ‘ the power of Christ will be manifested in all, by the destruction either of sin, or of the sinner ? The hearts which now yield to the impressions of his Spirit, are broken only in order to be formed anew, and

to become vessels of honour, fitted for the Master's use. •Those only, which continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed in pieces by the stroke of eternal vengeance.' Thus, since Christ himself vouchsafes to watch over and subdue our rebellious hearts, oh! Ellen, turn in humble penitence to the fold from which you have so perversely strayed; that, like a lost sheep restored by the saving mercy of your shepherd, you may at last hear the hallelujahs of joy pronounced even over *you*, glorifying the power of Him who is mighty to save—merciful to spare. We have only to fall, helpless in ourselves, at the cross of our Redeemer, and the strength of Jehovah shall bear us up. His powerful hand shall break the hardened heart, and, renewed by his grace, we shall become in Him the free partakers of pardon and of eternal life."

"Oh! Mr. Seymour," exclaimed Ellen, softened by this encouragement, "if I had never left Llan-vair, this day of sorrow would never have been mine; but I must not go there again—I could not meet those friends whom I have so long neglected,—whose friendship I have so wilfully cast away. No, no; they would not, could not see me so disgraced. Justly deserted by them all,

oh ! what will become of me, homeless orphan that I am ?”

Here she burst into tears ; and Mr. Seymour, gently taking her hand, replied, “ Would you then, Ellen, because you have hitherto perverted them, refuse the blessings which God, in his mercy, now again *offers* for your comfort, and thus provoke Him, who has bestowed them, to leave you destitute ? Humbled under the chastisement of God, rather accept any provision, which his wisdom shall see fit to appoint for your future welfare. Take your Bible,—it will teach you more than my precepts can do ; and there you will find every promise of support and consolation, for those who take ‘ refuge in the Lord.’ This evening Fanny will be here, and she, I trust, will supply a sister’s place. Do not, therefore, suppose you are deserted by any of us ; for heaven forbid that we, who are alike so frail, should reject the penitent, whom God vouchsafes to receive. Put your trust, then, wholly in Him ; and while I live, if it be his will, I will be as a father to you.”

Touched by this undeserved kindness, Ellen became more composed, and, after a few minutes’ silence, asked when the funeral of her mother was to take place.

“To-morrow,” replied Mr. Seymour, “we pay the last tribute to her remains. It will be a day of trial to you,—let it be one too of self-abasement. Offer the sacrifices of a broken spirit, and a contrite heart; and then I hope, my dear Ellen, that every remaining pride will give place to a grateful sense of God’s blessing, and that you will be prepared to accompany me to a home, which awaits you with every earthly comfort, where you shall be at liberty to follow your own pursuits without interference; and at Llanvair you may find much to renovate your mind, and restore tranquillity to your wounded heart.”

Ellen offered no resistance. She sobbed violently, but it was more in sorrow than with passion; and Mr. Seymour, glad to encourage any token of submission, continued patiently to urge all that could excite it. Seeing her more composed, he advised her, as she was still very weak, to lie down and try to sleep, that she might be better able to meet Fanny on her arrival; and then leaving her to the care of Russell, he went to arrange the preparations for the funeral.

The coach came, and brought—not Fanny, but Miss Aubrey. On hearing the summons from Mr. Seymour, she had kindly offered to take the office assigned to Fanny; as, being a more expe-

rienced traveller, she might be of more essential assistance, in case she could persuade Ellen to proceed at once to Llanvair. Her being with her, would, she thought, leave Mr. Seymour more at liberty to remain at Hereford, to settle, with greater comfort to himself, what remained of Mrs. Irwyn's affairs ; and although assured that Fanny would not shrink from any affliction, if required to meet it, yet she was glad to spare her young heart, the pain to which her own was but too well accustomed.

Mr. Seymour received her with grateful pleasure, as he guessed the motives which had led her to Hereford ; and, after telling her what had passed, he went to prepare Ellen for the meeting of her friend. He found, however, that she had been extremely restless for some time ; and though she now appeared more quiet, she was still insensible to everything around her. Mr. Seymour thought that the sight of Miss Aubrey might perhaps rouse her attention, and therefore requested her to appear ; but Ellen evinced no signs either of surprise or pleasure. Mr. Hervey was immediately sent for, but he assured them there was no symptom to create alarm, the attack being merely the effects of extreme exhaustion, which sleep would soon remove ; but he requested that

she might be kept perfectly quiet, and be diverted as much as possible from painful associations. Miss Aubrey insisted on passing the night by her young friend; and forgetting the fatigues of a long journey, in the wish of contributing to the comfort of another, she took her station by the bedside of Ellen, and administered the medicine to her, according to the directions given, till she gradually fell into a deep sleep. This lasted a considerable time, when at length waking she called for some drink. Miss Aubrey took the cup from Russell, which Ellen perceiving, she faintly asked, "Who was there?"

"It is I, my dear Ellen," replied Miss Aubrey, affectionately taking her hand; "I am come to nurse you, and as a sister to watch over you. Drink this," added she, smiling, "it will do you good, and I long to see you better."

Ellen looked steadily at her for some moments, as if she had only a confused remembrance of what she saw; then bursting into tears, she said, "Oh! I remember all now—but why are you here, dear Miss Aubrey? I deserve no kindness from you."

"We will both forget the past," said Miss Aubrey, cheerfully, "and now only think of present blessings, for I am very thankful to see you better."

“How can I be a cause of thankfulness to any one?” said Ellen, with a faint smile; “surely you cannot love me now.”

“I love you, as I have ever loved you,” replied Miss Aubrey; “but you must sleep now, and talk to me to-morrow.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Ellen, “what a difference is there between real, and pretended friendship, between the people of God, and those of the world! When I was gay and happy, I had friends who flattered and caressed me,—but what are they now?—while those whom I then neglected, whose counsels I despised, visit me in my affliction, yet spare me from reproach. Oh! Miss Aubrey, how ill have I requited your kindness! and yet you come to soothe these sad, sad hours of sickness and distress.”

“Think not of the past, just now, my Ellen,” replied Miss Aubrey; “you have many friends, and, believe me, we are all anxious to contribute to your comfort.”

“God is indeed most merciful to me,” said Ellen, “nor can I be too thankful for all these blessings; and yet, Miss Aubrey, I dare not now say that I will love righteousness, and better fulfil my duty; for I can do nothing of myself, but earnestly do I desire to be so sanctified, that God may dwell within my heart.”

“ If such be your prayer, it will not be offered in vain,” replied Miss Aubrey, “ for remember that God willeth not that any should be lost ; but such as draw near to Him, He will in no wise cast out. And if by sorrow the heart is made better, surely, dear Ellen, we ought cheerfully to bear it, under the hope that it may be so blessed to us.”

“ Yes,” exclaimed Ellen, her countenance brightening as she spoke, “ I know that I have every encouragement to be patient ; but I fear I have behaved very ill, and given a great deal of trouble to Mr. Seymour by my want of resignation, and by the pride which so ungratefully rebelled against his kindness. I do not wonder that dear Fanny will not come here, to bear with such ungoverned feelings, nor am I surprised that she is averse to meet one so unlike herself.”

“ Indeed, Ellen,” replied Miss Aubrey, “ you are mistaken, if you think that any such feelings prevented her coming. She longed to be with you from the moment she heard of your being ill ; and had you witnessed the contest between us, you would have known how desirous we both were of claiming the precedence as your nurse. She pleaded her earlier intimacy as giving her a prior right ; but as I soon proved that we were equal in

our affection towards you, age gave me the advantage, and I came off as you see—triumphant! But, to make up for her disappointment, I promised that I would take you to her as soon as possible. Nor is Lady Warton less anxious to see you, for she will not hear of Mr. Seymour's adopting you while she lives to want a daughter, such as she longs to claim in you; therefore she insists on his yielding, in this instance, his own wishes to hers, and begs that you will only think of Llanvair Hall as your future home."

Ellen smiled, and tears of gratitude glistened in her eyes, as she confessed the unmerited kindness of all her friends. "I hope I shall be able to go there very soon, for I long to leave Hereford, which, after to-morrow," added she, with some emotion, "will contain nothing to bind me to a scene of such painful associations."

Miss Aubrey read her thoughts, and, immediately changing the subject, endeavoured to divert her mind in cheerful conversation, and then persuaded her to compose herself to rest. To this she consented, conditionally that Miss Aubrey would leave her to the care of Russell, and also take rest for some hours. Miss Aubrey then left her, and Ellen soon fell into a sweet sleep—her

mind restored to comparative calmness and submission.

The next morning, at an early hour, Mr. Seymour followed to the grave the last remains of Mrs. Irwyn. He much wished that they might have been removed from the house unknown to Ellen; but Miss Aubrey, who sat with her, observed that the mournful bustle was not unheeded; and when she heard the tolling bell which summoned the mournful cavalcade to render "dust to dust," Ellen sank on the bosom of her friend, and wept bitterly for some time. On the return of Mr. Seymour she arose, and desiring Russell to bring her mourning, she dressed herself with more composure, and accompanying Miss Aubrey to the sitting-room, she received Mr. Seymour with much feeling, gratefully acknowledging his kindness to her poor mother and herself. She was pale and languid, but appeared resigned, and even expressed a wish of leaving Hereford, if possible, on the following morning; Miss Aubrey taking on herself the necessary arrangements for this, the remainder of the day passed more cheerfully than could have been expected; for though Ellen scarcely spoke, yet she seemed to take an interest in the conversation of her friends.

Mr. Seymour insisted on her retiring early for the night, that she might be better enabled to meet the fatigues of the ensuing day, and was about to bid her good night, when, with some hesitation, she requested leave to speak to him for half an hour, if she might sit up for that time. Hearing this, Miss 'Aubrey' said that she would go and finish packing ; but Ellen, taking her hand, replied, " Not on my account, dear Miss Aubrey, since from you I can have no concealments, and I am sure, that now you will not be surprised to hear of anything disgraceful to me." Miss Aubrey felt gratified by this mark of confidence ; but, too delicate to avail herself of it, she left the room, on the plea of being anxious to complete her preparations.

Ellen blushed as Mr. Seymour bade her command his services ; then, after a few minutes' silence, she said, " I believe that you correspond with Louis de Rancy—have you lately heard from him ?"

" I have," replied Mr. Seymour, " and am aware of what has passed between you ; but I trust all may yet be remedied."

" Never !" exclaimed Ellen, interrupting him in a decisive tone ; " I could not ask it : but so far as he is in error, in justice to myself I wish

him undeceived ; beyond that, I dare not require."

She then gave Mr. Seymour the last letter received from Louis, and explained every circumstance relative to the dance. He was shocked to find the cruelly selfish concealment with which Lady Selliston had deceived her, but was equally relieved on hearing so much of Ellen's conduct thus justified from the suspicions which had so strongly appeared against her. He bade her be comforted, adding, "that as the rest was committed in weakness,—not in depravity of heart,—he hoped that all might yet be rectified."

"The dress of Aurora," replied Ellen calmly, "cannot be so easily justified ; the disgust excited by such a display cannot be so remedied. No, Mr. Seymour ; Ellen left her sick mother for a sickening world,—left her duty for dissipation. That mother is now removed to a better care than mine ; and in the pleasure for which I so fatally left the path of duty, I have justly met the penalty of my disobedience. Seek not, therefore, to palliate these to one, who might indeed forgive, but never could forget them. For the rest, so far as truth will permit, I wish him to be undeceived, that he may still remember me with pity, even though I dare not ask his esteem. Say this from

me ; but tell him that in wishing his remembrance, I only ask it in his prayers."

Mr. Seymour promised to fulfil her wishes, and adhere most strictly to her injunctions. He saw that Louis was seriously pained, and as he could not but justify the line of conduct he had pursued, he dared not venture to encourage any hope of a reconciliation, though inwardly he believed that it would be eventually effected, under the evidence that Ellen had been more weak than wicked, deceived by the levity of others, as much as injured by her own. He then entreated her to go to bed, and feeling relieved by what had passed, she soon composed herself to rest.

The next morning Miss Aubrey, with her young charge and Russell, left Hereford. Mr. Seymour parted with Ellen, repeating the warmest assurances of continued kindness, and all that a generous and feeling heart could dictate under circumstances so trying to the young sufferer.

CHAPTER X.

ABOUT two years subsequently to the departure of Louis from England, General de Rancy died, leaving his son sole heir to his possessions.

To him, however, life had lost the charms with which a lively imagination had gilded it. He could not forget Ellen ; but irrevocably bound, by the dying injunction of his father, never to renew his engagement with her, he endeavoured to check every remembrance associated with his former attachment. From Mr. Seymour he had heard of her penitence, and the afflictions which had subdued her to feel it ; but he firmly adhered to his determination of seeing her no more : and though he sincerely prayed for her, as if her future happiness must still form a part of his own, he would allow no further interest to mingle in his

feelings towards her." Study and military duties now filled the vacuum which disappointment had made in his life and prospects, and in the labours of science he gradually lost that extreme of romance which, in painting an ideal world, had left its realities, if not neglected, heavy and uninteresting; so the future now lay before him, unadorned by those embellishments of fancy, in which an enthusiastic mind loves to revel. It was about this time that his regiment was recalled to England, and stationed in the Isle of Wight. There every neighbouring hill and distant perspective again painfully awakened remembrances of the past with which they were connected; but, while taught by their moral the fallacy of hopes reared only on the foundation of earthly ties, his heart did but draw more closely to those which sorrow can never destroy." He was not long in seeking an introduction to Mr. St. Williams, of whose family he had heard enough to excite a wish of intimacy, and with them he found that society, calculated to please a mind seeking the solid pleasures of Christianity.

Lyna Stanhope was still a member of that happy circle, and enjoyed, even in the arduous duties of her situation, all the privileges attached to a home.

The remembrance of Lady Catherine Foster would indeed often excite a regret that the mystery of their separation had never yet been developed. Yet in such regrets, discontent in her present blessings had no part, for truly did she value the home and friends which now surrounded her ; although she could never think of her former benefactress without a pang, that she who had once been the dearest to her, loved her no more under the suspicion of her ingratitude.

Years since then had passed away, and time may reconcile the injured to their injuries,—may change the human, like the vegetative creation, from the gloom of winter, to the brightness of summer, and fan with its wings the chaff of earthly cares from the solid fruits of experience, which the vicissitudes of life leave mingled on the moral world!—but it can never annihilate the remembrance of childhood,—that happy season, when the buoyancy of a light heart, unchecked by care, magnifies every enjoyment so far beyond its reality. The power of possessing happiness may remain the same, and the events of life change only in the estimate with which we value them. In age, as in youth, sorrow and joy may still bear their equal proportion, and each day bring its appointed measure of both. But as time

brings the experience of the one, it is in the retrospections of youth only, that the other can be remembered as unmixed with painful associations. Thus it was when Lyna, surrounded by every intrinsic blessing, still looked back on those of Layland's, and sighed to think that they were lost to her for ever!—but while memory thus recalled them, the anguish connected with them was softened, and the sense of injury subdued. Long had she now ceased to hope for a vindication of her wrongs, and a restoration to the affection of Lady Catherine on this side the grave. But limited is the wisdom of the human mind in discerning the government of Omnipotence, who sees not as we see, but whose decrees are guided by infinite love towards us, and often produce His purposes, by means weak in appearance,—mighty in effect! Justice may be sometimes procrastinated in trial of our faith; but if, in “evidence of things unseen,” we patiently await the consummation of the divine will, we shall hereafter trace blessings in all that we called evil, and mercy in that which we, in our blindness, deemed afflictive!

One evening, when Mr. St. Williams and his young people had just returned from a sail to Shanklin Chine, Louis, Miss St. Williams, and

Lyna lingered on the shore, to watch the last decline of an October sun, and were moralising on the glories of creation, when Mr. St. Williams, hastily returning to them, called Lyna, and, in a tone of more than his usual seriousness, requested her to follow him, as a servant had been waiting some time, to see her on some urgent communication. Alarmed by so unusual a summons, she silently obeyed, without venturing an inquiry as to the purport ; till, on reaching the house, she caught sight of a person on horseback, bearing the livery of Lady Catherine Foster. She turned pale, and looked anxiously for explanation, when Mr. St. Williams led her into his study, and with much kindness gave her a letter, which, as coming from Lady Catherine, he guessed might be painful to her. It was, indeed, one written by her desire, containing a most earnest request that Lyna would go to her without delay, as she was very ill, and wished to see her once more before her death.

Poor Lyna became extremely agitated, but was too happy in the hope of receiving the last blessing of her earliest friend, to suffer a remembrance of the past to detain her from an immediate compliance ; and, after a hasty preparation, she followed Mr. St. Williams to the little vessel wait-

ing to conduct her from the island. He insisted on accompanying her as far as Lymington, when he left her with all the anxiety of a parent, full of hope respecting the result of her errand; and having promised to write by the earliest post, Lyna took leave of her kind friend, and in a few hours was by the bedside of Lady Catherine Foster.

She found too truly, that the messenger had not exaggerated the situation of her ladyship, who, supported by pillows, seemed as one patiently awaiting the relief, which death alone can bring for the sufferings of expiring nature. The painful watchfulness with which she had listened to every sound in the expectation of Lyna's return to her, together with the dread of being refused the only wish that now animated her, with a desire that life might be for a while prolonged, had produced such a degree of restlessness and fever, that those who attended her were not a little alarmed for the result.

When the moment of trial arrived, however, she evinced less of agitation, than of deep and silent feeling. Strengthened by a momentary energy, she raised herself as she heard the well-remembered voice of Lyna; and after fixing a short but steady gaze on her countenance, as if to read

whether affection could still exist, she exclaimed, "Lyna!—my child!" and then pressed her fondly to her bosom, unable further to express the feelings with which her heart was agonised. Both remained for some time locked in each other's arms, till the deep sobs of Lyna recalled them to mutual forbearance and exertion. Ellis, as soon as she saw them in some degree composed, endeavoured to dissuade her mistress from dwelling further on a subject which must excite so much emotion; but Lady Catherine would not hear of Lyna's leaving the room, until she had explained the mystery by which both had so severely suffered. Then, turning to Lyna with an imploring look, she added, "Do not deprive me of an hour, which may be the last granted to me for earthly communications; and you have, my poor deserted girl, much to hear,—much to forgive."

"Never deserted," exclaimed Lyna, "since I am spared to such an hour as this! But let us not think of the past; the future may be fraught with many unlooked-for mercies."

"Yes, my Lyna," said Lady Catherine, calmly; "but time and blessings which have been neglected cannot be so remedied. I, in their possession, became self-willed, and, proudly trusting to my own weak judgment, wronged an orphan, relying

blindly on appearance; and now the means of restitution are no longer mine. A blessing, Lyna, is all that I can give you."

"And that," replied Lyna, "is all that I would ask,—the restitution which I shall best value. Forgiven and forgiving, let us then, my best of friends, forget our mutual injuries, which are more than repaid in this moment of kindness."

Lady Catherine raised her eyes to heaven, as inwardly she praised God for having thus spared her life to see the innocence of one, whom she had so dearly loved; and taking the hand of Lyna, said, with evident feeling, "I have long left you, my poor child, exposed to the trials of a hard world, and yet you come to me, the same affectionate girl as when my home was yours. Oh! Lyna, if the justice of the Almighty were less infinite,—that we by Him were judged as we on earth condemn each other!—what would be our portion? But limited is our knowledge of another's heart."

Here Lady Catherine became exhausted, and Lyna would fain have persuaded her to rest; but to this she would not accede, until she had related all the circumstances which had occurred since her illness, in which the hypocrisy of Mrs. Grentham had been completely exposed; adding, that

having unfortunately made her will in favour of Mrs. Grentham, to whom she had given it, she could not in honour consider her property now at her own disposal.

Lyna assured her ladyship, that she had never considered herself as having any claims to share it, and had consequently never indulged herself in such an anticipation ; the prospect of dependence, therefore, had always been familiar to her, so that she could feel no disappointment in the result of Lady Catherine's longer intimacy and connexion with Mrs. Grentham ; and although she sincerely lamented the duplicity of one, whom she had once believed her friend, yet she as truly hoped that prosperity would be blessed to her, as various are the ways of the Almighty to effect our return to Him. " Do not then regret your generosity to her," added Lyna, mildly endeavouring to reconcile Lady Catherine to approve, rather than condemn in herself, what she had done ; " and believe me, that my affection and gratitude, if these be valuable to you, could be but ill cancelled by pecuniary payment, since they are the offspring of your own rearing, and have never ceased to exist, under the liveliest remembrance of your generous care of me, when I most needed it. The education, which has enabled me to support myself in

a respectable independence, was your gift, and in this, be assured, I am truly happy : let me then continue in that sphere to which from my birth I was designed."

Lady Catherine was deeply sensible of the disinterested gratitude of Lyna, and now consented to compose herself for the night, on condition that Lyna would also go to bed.

Charity has thrown a veil over the early history of Mrs. Grentham, which prejudice must not here attempt to raise ! And if the errors of a neglected education, can palliate the offences to which it leads, these may be offered in her behalf. She was an only child of weak and injudicious parents, who, unwilling to cloud the springtime of childhood by what they considered "unnatural restraints," left her to the ungoverned waywardness of a selfish temper. She was beautiful, and her beauty met its full meed of praise, which, with such a disposition, added to the disadvantages of her unhappy training. She married early, and was early left a widow, with means, which however abundant in themselves, were scarcely adequate to the demands of her extravagant caprices. Under such circumstances she thought it a politic scheme, to cultivate an intimacy with her wealthy relative, Lady Catherine Foster ; and, if possible,

court her favour, at the sacrifice of any personal convenience. The result of this may be remembered by our readers; we need not, therefore, repeat the many intrigues, employed to obtain such an ascendancy over the mind of Lady Catherine, as might eventually assist her ambitious views. The power of her own fascinating address, and assumed affection, had done much in promoting the desired end, but finding that in Lyna she had a powerful rival, she determined to effect her removal. We have seen how this was accomplished, and Mrs. Grentham then believed herself secure of every advantage; but, as is generally the case where evil is designed,—however triumphant it may for a time appear,—in striving to undermine the cause of another, she weakened her own, and by her continued efforts to prejudice Lady Catherine against her former favourite, she at length excited a degree of suspicion as to the motives of such unprovoked insinuations against one, who, as being wholly discarded, ought rather to have been safe from further animadversion. Mrs. Grentham overacted her part, also, in her professions towards Lady Catherine, who, though blindly partial, would still often turn away disgusted by the flattery which was so lavishly bestowed. Yet Mrs. Grentham became more and

more frequently a guest at Laylands; for if she could ill bear the restraint of its monotonous retirement, or the little peculiarities of old age, she was willing to sacrifice a few months in the year, under the hope of eventually receiving so ample a compensation.

It was during one of these visits, that Lady Catherine was seized with an inflammation of the chest, which so soon reduced her, that a rapid decline was apprehended as its consequence. In illness, while dependent on those who surround us, for those temporal comforts which kindness can so easily bestow, gratitude is soon excited, and every little attention opens the heart to receive the tenderest impressions towards our fellow-creatures. Of these, no one could be more susceptible than Lady Catherine; though a stranger to the feelings of disinterested gratitude, Mrs. Grentham sufficiently understood its theory to avail herself of the plea it afforded her to make it subservient to her own purposes. For this, she now confined herself to the sick-room of Lady Catherine, endeavouring to administer such comforts as she deemed most desirable for an invalid. Her ladyship was not insensible to this devotion, and in a moment of gratitude, believing that she had now little time remaining for earthly interests, she

made her will in favour of Mrs. Grentham, to whom, with the exception of a few annuities, she left the sole disposal of her property. Ellis, who became somewhat tenacious of Mrs. Grentham's interference in what she considered was her own department, and saw with a jealous eye the unbounded influence she had now acquired over her mistress, began to complain to Lady Catherine, that she was rather more officious in the domestic concerns of Laylands than was necessary, and often hinted that Mrs. Grentham was not so "*over-polite* for nothing;" nor yet closeted with Miss Herald an hour every day, "nobody knew why"—without some design, at present mysterious. Lady Catherine, however, possessed too much good sense to heed such insinuations, believing them to be produced only by the jealousy of her faithful servant; until one morning that Ellis entered the room with a countenance of some importance, and having closed the door, related to her mistress a conversation which she had very undesignedly heard, between Mrs. Grentham and Miss Herald. The purport of this was, an evident anxiety on the part of the former to conceal from Lady Catherine certain circumstances which she seemed apprehensive might be developed, and which would betray her own manœuvring respect-

ing Lyna, but which, with the assistance of Miss Herald, and a little caution on both sides, might still be concealed, at all events, until after the death of her ladyship. In this, Ellis had gathered sufficient information to be convinced that some treachery had been practised in the affair of Miss Stanhope, of which Mrs. Grentham was the principal actor; she therefore did not hesitate in charging her with such duplicity, most boldly to her mistress.

Poor Lady Catherine listened to all this with mingled feelings of pain, surprise, and horror! She knew Ellis too well to doubt her veracity; but still, she endeavoured to hope that some misunderstanding must have arisen, from having only partially heard the circumstances, and therefore desired Ellis not to repeat her suspicions to any other person, but to leave the result entirely to her own judgment.

Left to herself, Lady Catherine carefully endeavoured to recal the particulars of that unhappy event, which had given her so much pain; and in comparing former with later circumstances, she was enabled to trace many inconsistencies in the conduct of Miss Grentham, where Lyna was concerned, which hitherto had passed unnoticed. She therefore now determined to mention the

subject, without insinuating any suspicions, to Mrs. Grentham, to see how far she could stand the test of such a trial. Accordingly, when they were alone that evening, endeavouring to compose herself, she gradually led to the conversation, and fixing her eyes for some minutes steadily on the countenance of Mrs. Grentham, she said, "Georgiana, I wish to see Lyna Stanhope; for although, in forfeiting my esteem, she can claim no further patronage from one whose kindness she so ungratefully requited, yet, if possible, a Christian should die in peace with all mankind, and, perhaps, a deathbed forgiveness may be the means of exciting her to penitence, and awakening serious reflections, which may be eventually blessed to her."

During this unexpected proposal, Mrs. Grentham could not wholly conceal the emotions of a guilty conscience; she became extremely agitated, but at length, endeavouring to command herself, she used her utmost efforts to dissuade her ladyship from such a step. "I am sure," added she, "Miss Stanhope ill deserves such kindness from you; nor would she appreciate your motives, in offering your forgiveness, which the world would only construe as a tacit confession on your part of conscious injury towards her;—at least, she would

take care to make it appear so, for I know her to be a most insinuating hypocrite.”

“If she *is* so,” calmly replied her ladyship, “it the more b^ehoves me to use the last privileges of life, in exhorting the unhappy girl, who was once my tendest care, to seek, ere it be too late,—not mine,—but the forgiveness of her God, and the intercession of that blessed Saviour, from whom perhaps she lives an alien!—Impressed with the awfulness of a dying charge, would not the most hardened be drawn by such an appeal to confess its fearful truth, and so be induced to seek a timely repentance?”

“It is most generous in you, my dear Lady Catherine,” exclaimed Mrs. Grentham, endeavouring to assume composure, “thus to desire another’s welfare, even at the expense of your own suffering; but surely your recovery ought to be the first consideration, and I cannot but dread the result of any excitement, as nothing but extreme quietness is likely to restore you. Therefore, let me entreat you most earnestly, for the sake of all who love you, to abstain from the excitement of such a trial.”

“To be at peace,” replied Lady Catherine, “my mind must be relieved of whatever militates against its comfort. It is, therefore, my wish,—

may my desire,—that Miss Stanhope may be sent for, that the choice of seeing me may at least be left to her own feelings ; and how far mine are equal to the trial, surely I must be the best judge.”

This was said in a tone of decision, which Mrs. Grentham knew was, as coming from Lady Catherine, most unalterably firm ; and too much agitated in herself to make any further resistance, she left the room, and going to her own, gave free vent to her passion in a burst of tears.

The next morning, after planning a thousand schemes, none of which were likely to succeed in preventing Lady Catherine's purpose, Mrs. Grentham resolved that she would not remain to meet the object of her resentment, but would leave Miss Herald as her agent in counteracting, if possible, the mischief which *Lyna* might effect ; for though the will was already in her own possession, she knew that while life remained, another might easily be substituted. With these determinations she entered the sick room, and declared, that although it would grieve her to be absent from *Laylands* at such a moment, she thought, under the circumstance of another's coming, she had better leave it for a few days, as so many being in the house would only create bustle, and be very in-

convenient; therefore, to prove herself disinterested, she would resign her own gratification for that of others.

Lady Catherine, who had now seen enough of Mrs. Grentham to understand the hidden motives of such a proposal, replied, with some indifference, that if the presence of Miss Stanhope could be in the least painful to her, she would, certainly not press her remaining to meet it; and she therefore begged Mrs. Grentham would use the carriage that day, to convey her wherever she wished, as, in consequence of such an objection, Miss Stanhope need not be sent for until the following morning.

Mrs. Grentham, full of rage and mortification, at a loss to conceive what had wrought so unexpected a change, evident not only in the wishes of Lady Catherine respecting Lyna, but in her manners towards herself, hastened to pour forth her griefs in the bosom of her friend Miss Herald, who endeavoured to persuade her that all might arise merely from some conscientious feeling in her ladyship, and that doubtless Lyna would never think of returning to one who had so long deserted her. Comforted with this hope, Mrs. Grentham prepared for her removal, and having taken a most anxious leave of Lady Catherine, with a thousand protestations of affection,—her own heart

suffering the miseries of fear, ambition, and conscious guilt—she drove from Laylands, as if the fate of empires rested on the result of her absence!

The ensuing morning Lady Catherine bade Ellis write to Lyna, and despatch a servant to Niton Grove, that she might, as soon as possible, be relieved from the anxiety with which she would await the issue of his errand. It was not long after this was done that Ellis brought to her mistress a slip of paper, which had been found in Mrs. Grentham's room, probably dropped in the hurry of packing; and supposing it to be of no value, Ellis was about to throw it into the fire, when, as she said, curiosity led her to read its contents, which fully corroborated all that she had before reported of Mrs. Grentham's manœuvring. The paper was rather worn, and had evidently been written some time ago, previously to the departure of Lyna, containing a playful paragraph in the handwriting of Mrs. Grentham, bearing her own and the initials of Miss Herald. Its purport was, "that in case of Lyna's removal from Laylands, and total banishment from the favour of Lady Catherine—and the hopes of Mrs. Grentham, in consequence, being realised—Jane Herald was to receive a reward, adequate to her as-

sistance in the affair, and for life, to share the advantages of such an event."

It would be impossible to describe the mingled feelings of Lady Catherine on reading this development of Mrs. Grentham's real character ; nor need we repeat the meeting which followed between herself and Lina. Mutual confidence and affection were soon restored ; and Lady Catherine, convinced how much, through misunderstanding, she had wronged her young friend, was now only anxious to make every reparation in her power. At first she considered her honour too far pledged to retract the will made in behalf of Mrs. Grentham ; but, on the evidence of such premeditated guilt, she now considered herself perfectly justified in cancelling it. She therefore wrote to Mrs. Grentham, enclosing the piece of paper before alluded to, and declared her intention of making over to Miss Stanhope the whole of her property.

Her mind being thus relieved, Lady Catherine appeared so animated, and thought herself so much better, that all around her began to entertain sanguine hopes of her recovery. She would fain have completed the remaining task, which she said was far too important to be procrastinated ; but, overcome by the earnest entreaties of

the watchful Lyna, she was at length persuaded to leave her affairs until the following morning, being already fatigued by the exertions of the past day. But, alas ! death waits not the accomplishment of human designs ; for, ere the coming of another morrow, it had for ever closed those hopes, with which the last evening had been so bright. Scarcely had Lady Catherine been settled for the night, when she became exceedingly oppressed, and before the arrival of medical assistance, she peacefully expired on the bosom of her faithful Lyna.

It would be only painful to relate the anguish of those left to mourn the loss of one, who, as a friend, mistress, and benefactress, had been so justly endeared. We will, therefore, only add, that as Lady Catherine had lived respected, so she died universally regretted.

A despatch was immediately forwarded to Mrs. Grentham, without whom, as being left sole executrix, nothing could be settled. It reached her, just as she was bitterly lamenting over the contents of Lady Catherine's last letter, and the immediate transition from rage to malicious joy, on finding the wishes of the deceased had been thus so unexpectedly frustrated, bore sufficient evidence how insincere had been her profession of gratitude

and affection towards Lady Catherine, and how little she now mourned the death of a benefactress, from whose bounty she was about to possess every earthly comfort. She desired the messenger of these welcome tidings immediately to return to Laylands, that everything might be prepared for her arrival there on the following morning, as she would herself superintend the funeral. She then sent to Miss Herald, desiring that she would join her without delay, and henceforth consider herself, according to their agreement, a resident of Laylands.

Poor Lyna waited not the coming of these new tenants. Having assisted the distressed Ellis in performing the last sad offices due to the remains of Lady Catherine, she prepared her mind for the trial of quitting for ever all that was associated with her happiest years. Once more she sought the chamber of death, and looking on the placid countenance of her who seemed only to sleep on a bed of peace, she knelt down by her side, and imploring present support, and the blessings of divine grace on her future life, she mingled with her tears the praises of a grateful heart, for having been spared to receive the last benedictions of her dearest friend. She then took leave of Ellis, and hastening from the room, gave one last look as

she drove from Laylands ; and then covering her face with both her hands, looked up no more until she reached Lyminster, where Mr. and Mrs. St. Williams waited to receive and accompany her, in her return to Niton Grove.

Mrs. Grentham, who immediately added to her own, the name of Foster, on her arrival at Laylands, soon assumed all the prerogatives of possession. The funeral over, old servants and old furniture were alike discarded for new ones. Laylands became modernised by every art which fancy could design, and magnificent hatchments were placed in pompous parade of mourning, wherever they could be most conspicuous.

Now in the midst of all that ambition could have asked,—surrounded by every luxury which fortune could command,—the anxious hopes of many a long year fully realised, — was Mrs. Grentham Foster happy ? She surely thought, that when possessed of wealth, power,—and of course *friends*, —she could scarcely have a wish ungratified ; but no sooner were they her's, than she still felt the want of a something more, which none of these could purchase. Friends, indeed, she had to court the favour of her smiles, but their professions gave her no pleasure, their flattery could not gratify ; for she remembered what her own had

been, when another filled her place,—and then felt herself desolate even in the midst of thousands! Soon, too, she became suspicious even of Miss Herald; yet, bound to her by many a secret tie, she was forced to profess regard, nor dared she release herself from one, whose presence became daily more hateful to her, as being only a mirror, on which was reflected a dreadful register of past remembrances. She placed no confidence in the most trusty of her servants, for, being a stranger to disinterested feelings, she knew not how another could possess them; so that at length she found the charge of such an establishment only a burden, which even its advantages could scarcely lighten, and those very riches for which her heart had so long yearned, became a weight—heavier than she could bear. Mistrusting all around her, she could no longer find a faithful servant to bear with her suspicious doubtings, nor could she claim one *sincere friend* in all that throng of guests who daily paid their tribute to her wealth and situation. Thus miserable in herself, she wondered what it was that made her so, surrounded by splendour and power. But these, alas! cannot stifle the whisperings of an accusing conscience, when, like a never-dying worm, it cankers the heart on which it feeds!—they cannot gild the

dark hours of night with those bright beams of peace which rest on the people of God!—of a peace,—so passing understanding, that without it a palace can afford no comforts ; yet, where it falls, a dungeon may contain a happy prisoner !

In the mean time Lyna, surrounded by every kindness, enjoyed a life of tranquillity ; for the present was no longer embittered by painful remembrances of the past. Her most earnest wish had been gratified, and now, happy in the little independence which her labours supplied, she envied not more wealthy possessions.

“ Such,” said Mr. St. Williams one day to his children, who had been discussing the unexpected and extraordinary means by which Lyna had been justified from the accusations so long assumed against her,—“ such is the wonderful, and never-failing justice of God’s government, towards the humblest of His creatures. Too finite, indeed, is the limited comprehension of the human mind, immediately to understand the decrees of Infinite Wisdom ; but never are the works of injustice left to triumph over truth, since time ever develops the mysteries of divine power, even to the narrow sight of man, who may often trace them through the medium of circumstances, apparently so trifling in themselves, that

in their end only can we estimate their importance."

Louis had been an attentive listener to the moral precepts of the good father. They opened to him a wide field for contemplation ; and, inclined to enjoy the musings of a solitary ramble, he left his companions for a while, and strolled to a projecting cliff which overlooked the bay. There he stood, meditating on what he had just heard, tracing the dispensations of Providence in favour of his own mingled career, when the weak voice of a female, the tone of which was somewhat complaining, suddenly attracted his attention. He stooped forward to see whence it came, and on the sands, beneath the shelter of the cliff, he saw a lady in a low chaise, supported by pillows, evidently there for the benefit of the sea breeze. Several attendants were standing round her, some gathering weeds, and others picking shells, for her amusement ; but none seemed successful in their endeavours to please the restless invalid. Such a sight was not uncommon at Niton, and Louis was going to leave so distressing a scene, when he distinctly caught the name of Herbert, and again bending forward, he saw a gentleman advance to the chaise, and give a small basket of fruit to the lady, regretting that he could not procure a pine-apple, but hoped

that those beautiful grapes would compensate for the disappointment.

“That is the way you always treat me,” said the lady, in no very gracious temper; “I am sure that you might have found a pine, had you only taken the trouble to search for one, and you have been gone long enough to find a dozen; but I suppose it would have cost more than you thought proper to bestow upon a dying wife, although, if it were not for *my* money, you would scarcely have bread to eat.”

“Indeed, my love,” replied the patient husband, “I rather think that two pine-apples would not have cost so much as that little basket of simpler fruit has done; but from all the gardens in which I have been, I could not have gathered one sufficiently ripe for you: however, that you may not be so disappointed to-morrow, I have sent to beg the favour of one from Appuldercomb.”

Pacified in some degree by this hope for the morrow, the lady again took the rejected basket from her servant; and tasting the grapes, she declared that they were very bad, and as to the peaches, they were not fit to eat.

Louis now left his hiding-place, anxious to satisfy himself that he was not mistaken in the

persons before him ;^u and yet, could that altered man be Dr. Herbert ? Having, however, descended the cliff, he immediately made himself known to the party.

Dr. Herbert took the offered hand of Louis, and pressing it between both his own, looked expressively on his countenance, but remained silent for some minutes ; while Mrs. Herbert, delighted by the novelty of another acquaintance, brightened as she tried to smile in welcome of so unexpected a meeting. Louis expressed his concern on seeing her so great an invalid ; but, always alarmed by such condolences, she endeavoured to avert the subject, assuring him that she was considerably better, and now only had a little weakness to conquer, which sea air would, no doubt, remove. Her looks, however, contradicted her words ; for consumption had too evidently preyed on her cheek, and left but a small vestige of what Mrs. Herbert had once been. Still, she endeavoured to conceal its effects from the observation of others, as much as to deceive her own heart from its dreaded issue. Dressed in all the extravagance of fashion, her ghastly cheek rosy with an artificial bloom,^o the unhappy woman would fain have borrowed the semblance of health, by assuming its prerogatives ; but none of these could dis-

guise the ravages of that fatal disease : and, while she vainly endeavoured to suppress the momentary cough which interrupted her efforts to be cheerful, Louis sighed, as he looked with deep compassion on that sickly form, which so soon must exchange its costly trappings for the shroud of death !

Common-place observations followed between Dr. Herbert and Louis ; for although the thoughts of both were, probably, only full of associations mutually interesting, yet neither dared to touch upon subjects, which must have led to those of painful import. The invalid then expressing a wish to return home, Louis was about to take his leave ; but as Dr. Herbert pressed him most earnestly to join them for the remainder of the day, he promised to do so, as soon as he had apprised Mr. St. Williams of his intention.

Dr. Herbert was indeed an altered man since Louis had last seen him ; for, although not yet an old man, sorrow had prematurely laid the marks of age upon his brow. His fine manly countenance was no longer animated with the vigour of a light heart, and the experience of cruel ingratitude had chilled him, almost to misanthropy. But the voice of one, whom the world had not yet taught to shun the unfortunate, suddenly rekin-

dled the latent spark of generous feeling, and as he looked on the noble countenance of Louis, he felt as if the sympathy it gave might yet awaken in his own heart some of its former energy.

Naturally of an open and generous disposition, had he been taught in early life the necessity of self-control, and the discipline of a better education, Dr. Herbert might have lived, as much honoured and beloved, as he was now pitied and deserted. This desertion from those who, when he was a "good companion," courted his society, and fed upon his hospitality, he felt as a severe trial; but it was the more embittered by the consciousness, that had he better served his God, in the sacred office with which he had been so injudiciously invested, he would not have been deserted by his peace of mind: he would have found a rock on which to rest securely amid the storms of earthly cares; and tribulations would then have fallen only as the visitings of Heaven! But he had perverted the talents, and turned to bitterness the blessings which had been bestowed, and was left to feel the anguish of an accusing heart. His children, of whom he had made idols, lived but as thorns to pierce the bosom which had so proudly, so fondly fostered them! yet he dared not complain, for he had brought

them up in the neglect of their God : how then could he expect them to revere an earthly parent ? He had made religion only a secondary object in their education,—and could he now hope that their conduct would be governed by its laws ?

When left alone with Louis, Dr. Herbert unreservedly confided to him all his domestic afflictions. He told him that ever since the unfortunate elopement of Caroline, Mrs. Herbert had declined under the pressure of so heavy a blow ; and, unable to bear up against the shame and disappointment, which it had brought on them all, her temper had yielded to the irritability of caprice and restlessness ; that notwithstanding all their united efforts to recal their daughter by every assurance of forgiveness, she had rejected their appeal, and declared that she would never return to a home where she could be regarded only as a criminal. From that period they had never heard from her, nor had they been able to trace her destination. Her unhappy father, believing that in London he might have a better chance of discovering her abode, and thinking that the health of Mrs. Herbert required better advice than he could procure in the country, determined to leave Durnford Rectory, and place

his parochial duties in the hands of another, that he might for a time reside in the metropolis. This he had done, but all his efforts to reclaim his child had hitherto been unavailing ; nor had he ever been able to gather any tidings of her welfare, excepting that a Mrs. Melford had been known in Rouen,—said to be wretched in her marriage, Mr. Melford being not only a most profligate gambler, but also tyrannical in his conduct as a husband. By the description of her person, no doubt remained that this was poor Caroline. Dr. Herbert, therefore, immediately on hearing this, had set off to Rouen ; but Melford was no longer there, and it was supposed that, under a feigned name, he had fled from that place, to try elsewhere the success of his villainous enterprises. Thus disheartened by these fruitless researches, the afflicted father returned to England, without any remaining hope of finding his stray lamb. But another cause of anguish met him on his return home, for Frederic was expelled from college, in consequence of having excited a rebellion ; and being so disgraced, he resolved to enter the army in India,—declaring that if his father refused to purchase him a commission, he would enlist as a common soldier. To the army, however, Dr. Herbert could raise no objection, as it seemed the

only alternative under all circumstances ; but the enormous debts already incurred by his son's extravagance at college, together with the sum required to establish him in a military profession, reduced him to the necessity of giving up his establishment at Durnford, and to retire on the produce of his living, which, with his wife's settlement, would still enable them to live in every comfort, if not in their former style. Having thus despatched his son to India, he purposed returning to Lymington, if possible, to let the rectory at Durnford, and to take possession of a less expensive residence : but Mrs. Herbert being too ill to bear the bustle of these arrangements, he had taken a lodging at Shanklin, until everything was prepared for her reception at their new abode.

Louis listened, deeply interested in this detail of accumulated sorrow ; nor could he but admire the resignation with which his unhappy friend endured his present trials, and the patient forbearance with which he submitted to the caprices of a truly provoking wife. Far from complaining of her, he spoke of her situation with equal commiseration and tenderness, palliating as much as possible the fretfulness of her temper, induced by the sufferings of a lingering illness, and the

anxiety which she had suffered in the conduct of her children. Humbled in himself, under the stroke of domestic calamity, his once proud mind was now subdued to receive the reflections of an awakened conscience ; and convinced of the errors of his past life, he resolved to begin a new career, and to seek in the duties incumbent on a minister, the happiness which, in their neglect, he had so justly forfeited. Louis now took leave of his friends, promising that he would be a frequent visitor to them during their stay at Shanklin, assured, that through much tribulation Dr. Herbert would yet be blessed ; and impressed with those strange vicissitudes, which in a few years had so changed the views of a once happy circle, he returned home to meditate on the fallacy of human speculations.

CHAPTER XI.

FIVE years had now elapsed since Ellen had become a resident at Llanvair, and that time had changed her to a consistent Christian. It was, however, long before the ungoverned spirit of her proud heart was subdued to the influences of religion; and though with Lady Warton she could scarcely feel her orphan situation, so delicately was it alleviated by every affectionate attention, yet pride would often overcome her better self, and pain her generous friends, by leaving them to suppose that she was unhappy in her dependence, or dissatisfied with their endeavours to make her forget it. Such relapses were, however, never lasting; and when she saw that she had really wounded the feelings of others by her impetuosity, she would struggle severely with herself to conquer her temper, and do all in her

power to atone for the sorrow she had occasioned. Her language was, however, no longer, “I *will* do what is right,” but, “oh! I wish that *myself* were so subdued, that the Spirit of God might dwell within my heart, and actuate my every thought, word, and deed.” Soon after her return to Llanvair, she had renewed all her former avocations with her former zeal; but when the novelty had again passed away, those daily duties became irksome to her, and she would sometimes think them tedious and fatiguing. The retirement of Llanvair too became joyless to her, and then she would think of poor Caroline, and of those giddy days which they had shared together; and as these recollections returned to her mind, she was almost tempted to wish that Llanvair were less monotonous—less dull. Yet she continued steadily to pursue the “better part,” convinced that the fault of *ennui* was wholly in herself, and she would pray the more earnestly to be preserved from the instability of her own heart, and to be enabled more steadily to pursue a course of Christianity.

Thus, with a constant watchfulness over herself, and a steadfast reliance on the assistance of her Heavenly Father, her pride of heart gradually gave place to a humbled spirit. She became

docile towards others, and at last, uniformly mild within herself. It is true, her spirits had lost their early buoyancy; she no longer trod the elastic step of happy carelessness, and every exertion seemed a fatigue to her. Her cheek too had lost its rosy playfulness; pale with the sickly hue of sorrow, she excited interest—not now of admiration—but of pity. Her once brilliant talents were dimmed by a melancholy, which, in all she did, betrayed itself the characteristic of her feelings. Yet she never complained of being unhappy, but was often heard to say, that she would not exchange her present quiet life for all the pleasure she had once enjoyed in a gayer world.

But she was now called upon to evince the fruits of that religion which she professed. The cup of sorrow was again given to try the strength of her faith, and she received it well and meekly in submission to the will of God. Lady Warton, who was justly endeared to Ellen as a fond mother, now sank under the decay of years, and, after a short illness, departed to that rest, which “remaineth for the people of God.” As “blessings brighten as they take their flight,” so Ellen clung to her benefactress, as never, never had she been so beloved, so essential to her, as in her decline;

but her sorrow bore not now the violence of uncontrolled grief; and assured that her own loss would only be gain to her departing friend, she endeavoured to check every selfish complaint.

It was the morning on which Lady Warton's illness first assumed an alarming aspect, that Fanny and Ellen stood anxiously watching the invalid, when, calling them to her, she blessed them both, exhorting them diligently to "press forward towards the mark of our high calling," and to go on from "strength to strength," until their faith should be perfected in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Then turning to Ellen, she said, "Mourn not, my child, that God is about to take a sinner to salvation; rather praise Him with me, that a pilgrimage of many cares is thus drawing to a close; that my 'warfare is accomplished,' and that soon, I shall be with Him, whom 'not having seen I love,' and in whom, through the grace of God, I now 'rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' For the 'night is far spent,' the 'Sun of Righteousness, is risen over me with healing in His wings,' and no powers of darkness can dim the 'brightness of His glorious coming.' Weep not for me then, neither weep for yourself, my orphan child, for you will never be left desolate, while you can say, 'In the Lord put I my

trust.' From Mr. Seymour too, you will, I am sure, receive a parent's kindness; and although I have secured you such a provision as will, I trust, leave you independent, yet refuse not the home which will be offered to you at St. Llenards, —at all events, until Herbert returns to be elsewhere your protector, should you desire it: and, Ellen, as I know that you will value what I now say to you, let me entreat you to conquer that disposition to melancholy, in which I fear you sometimes indulge. Your trials have been severe; but the Christian to whom affliction is blest, looks back upon it, only as the storm which drove him to the bosom of his Saviour! I know, my love, that you would fain ask, 'How can I appear in spirits, when all my fondest hopes have been so early blighted?' I answer, that were you so, it would be inconsistent with a feeling heart,—nor should I wish to see such spirits prevail, after the experience of such sad lessons. But is there no medium between these two extremes?—Remember, Ellen, that if you would honour the religion you profess, you should endeavour most tenderly to guard it from the opprobrium of *melancholy*, which is too often attached to it, by those who wish to find an excuse for its neglect."

"Surely," said Ellen, "no one who has known

me, can wonder that I appear depressed; nor could they charge to religion a sadness, which religion only has had power to mitigate; since, were it not for its consolations, not all the blessings of earth could alleviate the anguish, with which the past has been so painfully fraught."

"But people of the world," my dear Ellen," replied Lady Warton, "will not argue on the evidence of truth, where religion is the subject of animadversion. Affliction, indeed, often leads to piety, and piety again brings peace. The world, however, reversing this, makes no allowances for the trials which equally assail the Christian as the infidel; but if beneath the weight of private sorrow a Christian is seen to droop, it is not told that *religion only could* enable the patient sufferer so silently to endure; but it is said, that *religion* has sapped the buoyant spirits of youth, and checked its characteristic sprightliness. Let it then be your aim, so to manifest the 'sweet uses of adversity,' in the cheerfulness of a pious spirit, that none may doubt the source of its Holy peace. This is not, I know, an easy thing to do, for human nature loves to indulge in reveries of past regrets. Time, and a constant vigilance over your own thoughts, can therefore, perhaps, alone produce the habitual cheerfulness of genuine piety; but

whenever you feel tempted to cherish that melancholy, which will ever betray itself on the countenance, think within yourself, ‘Am I not exposing religion to the censure of my own weakness, and thus injuring the cause which I would so tenderly uphold? for the world *will not* see how much of earth is mingled with my sorrow;—how much of sin prevails in my regrets.’”

“Is grief then so sinful,” asked Ellen, “that we must not mourn our bereavements? Is not the heart made better by its sadness?”

“Sorrow, that is chastened with submission,” replied Lady Warton, “so far from being sinful, is beneficial; and when affliction meets us, hardened must that heart be, which is not touched by its visitation: but if, instead of receiving it as a cup of mercy, given, perhaps, to destroy the idolatry which too often mingles in our earthly affections, we drink its drop of bitterness, rejecting the blessings so profusely intermixed—then do we not pervert the dispensations of Unerring Goodness?”

“Oh! do not for one moment suppose,” exclaimed Ellen, “that I am insensible to the mercy which has dealt so bountifully with me; or, that I do not value and even *enjoy* the many, many blessings which are so undeservedly my

portion. Indeed, I am not *unhappy*, though I own that life seems changed, and that everything I see, appears to be tinged with the past; but, perhaps this change is only in myself, and thus unconsciously I may look depressed when I fancy myself otherwise.”

“ I truly believe that to be the case,” replied Lady Warton, “ and, therefore, am the more anxious to guard you against even the appearance of what does not exist. Yet think me not unmindful of the afflictions which have tried you; or that I cannot sympathise with the feelings they have left; but you have already conquered so much of human infirmity, that you have only to struggle a little more with your own heart, to become,—with the blessing of God,—an exemplary Christian. And then, my Ellen,” added Lady Warton, with an encouraging smile, “ retrospection will appear only as a cloud, on which is reflected the rainbow of heavenly promise!—and sorrow shall rise, but as a morning vapour, to fall back again, upon the soul, in countless blessings. But, the love of talking has carried me beyond my strength, for I feel myself exhausted; I believe I must now rest.”

Ellen silently pressed the hand of her benefactress, in token of grateful acknowledgment,

which her heart was too full to express ; then leaving Fanny to watch beside the invalid, she retired to her own room, and there meditating on what she had just heard, she felt how near the hour was at hand, in which her fortitude would be tried ; but seeking the support of Heaven, she prayed to be preserved from every besetting sin, that she might more patiently endure to the end, in the strength of Him who overcame the world.

Truly might it be said, that in the death of Lady Warton sin had lost its “ sting,” and the grave its victory. Its awful summons came to her expecting soul only as a messenger of “ glad tidings,” for in Jesus Christ was her “ life and resurrection ;” and as the resistless sword severed the corruptible from its incorruption, with a gentle sigh, and a smile of triumphant faith, the expiring saint entered “ into the joy of her Lord.” She died to sin and sorrow, and only “ fell asleep ” to waken for ever in the presence of her Saviour God !

Many were the tears shed over the tomb in which was consigned this “ poor man’s friend,” and many an aged hand was there upraised in earnest petition to “ die the death of the righteous,” and to know an end like hers !

Having performed the painful task of consigning the ashes of his beloved parent to its parent earth, Mr. Seymour turned to console those who, as consigned to his care, looked up to him for an example of resignation ; and as affliction generally brings with it many active duties to temper with employment its deadening force, so Mr. Seymour found, in the charge of Lady Warton's affairs, enough to engage his mind from the indulgence of melancholy associations.

To Fanny and Ellen he gave a portion of his cares, reminding them that in cheerfully fulfilling the wishes of the deceased, they could best prove their fond respect to her memory. The charge of the young Stacys devolved for a time to Ellen, and to Fanny the household concerns of Llanvair Hall ; while Mr. Seymour was himself engaged in settling the property according to the will of Lady Warton. The house and gardens were left to Fanny, and all the adjoining land to Herbert Irwyn. Four thousand pounds to Ellen,—to all the servants an annuity, and the remainder of her property and personal effects to be divided between Mrs. Stacy and her children.

As soon as all this was duly arranged, Fanny, with Ellen and her cousins, returned to St. Llenards ; but tears trickled down their cheeks

as they turned from the now deserted Hall. Mr. Seymour, however, endeavoured to divert their minds from a scene which he knew must excite painful feelings in them all; and turning to Ellen with a cheerful smile, he said, "Herbert will soon come home, and then I hope Llanvair Hall will be again peopled with happy hearts—and may many a bright sun yet rest upon its walls!" Fanny blushed, and Ellen at last smiled through her tears, as she caught the meaning of this apostrophe.

The education of the young Stacys being nearly completed, their parents had requested that in the event of Lady Warton's decease, which had long been anticipated, they might immediately be sent to India. Not many days after their removal to St. Llenards, Mr. Seymour heard of a friend going to Calcutta, to whose protection he knew that he might safely entrust them; he therefore gladly accepted so good an opportunity, and leaving Wales with his young people, in a few days reached London, from whence they were shortly to embark.

He left Fanny and Ellen with a promise, that if possible he would persuade Miss Aubrey to return with him for the summer, should he find her within his reach. Thus many a fair prospect

seemed again to open before them, in the hope of so soon seeing those, whose long absence had only strengthened the ties of mutual affection.

Mr. Seymour found Miss Aubrey already in London, but as she was always busy in the midst of duties, he could not prevail on her to leave such claims for the gratification of any selfish pursuit. She longed indeed once more to visit Llanvair, where she had enjoyed so many happy hours : for, although she who gave them their charm was no more, yet many still remained to share her fondest thoughts. The temptation was therefore great ; but as she had claims in Scotland, which seemed more essentially to demand her presence, duty triumphed, and decided her its follower. Her sister, whose marriage had so ill accorded with the principles of Miss Aubrey, had lately lost her husband ; and as affliction often reunites the broken tie of family love, Miss Aubrey ventured to hope that as the cause of their alienation was removed, her sister would again accept the affection which had thus outlived every unkindness and repulse. She had consequently written, offering to reside with her, if her doing so could in the least contribute to her comfort. To this she had received so cold an assent, that at first Miss Aubrey was tempted to relinquish her purpose ; but when she

reflected on the dreadful principles which her unhappy sister had imbibed, under the false tutorship of a husband whom she had too blindly loved, and that three little children were left by an infidel father to cherish in their ignorance the curse of infidelity, she felt peculiarly called upon to go and be the bearer of those glad tidings, which might waken them from the fatal sleep of unbelief! The opportunity of doing so was at least not withheld from her, although it was offered with so little encouragement; but however painful was the mission, she felt that it was a sacred duty, to which every private feeling must be sacrificed.

Mr. Seymour confessed that her arguments for this step were much too powerful to be refuted by one objection, and therefore now only endeavoured to strengthen, rather than oppose, so laudable a design. He bade her go, clothed in the armour of divine strength, that whatever repulses she would at first doubtless meet with in the perverse opposition of her sister's principles, she might stand firm in her own cause; endeavouring to prove their fallacy by the mild persuasions of truth, and, by gently feeding the minds of her younger charge, she might at length prepare the tainted soil to receive the seeds of the heavenly fruit.

Miss Aubrey saw indeed that duty, as Mr. Seymour had represented it, lay as a straight path before her; and though she could not help comparing the cordial invitations of Fanny and her affectionate Ellen, with the heartless acceptance of offered kindness, from the sister of her earliest care, yet she resolved no longer even to listen to the allurements of temptation, and therefore at once decided in favour of Scotland: but she promised Mr. Seymour, that as soon as she could release herself from more pressing claims, she would hasten to *Llanvair, and pass a long summer with her young friends.*

Having seen his nieces comfortably settled in their "floating home," Mr. Seymour gladly turned his thoughts to his own family at St. Llenards, and was one morning going to the bank to settle some business of Lady Warton, previously to his quitting London, when he saw a young man apparently returning from thence, whose face was, he thought, familiar to him; and looking more steadily at the stranger as he approached him, he immediately recognised Herbert Irwyn!

Greetings of mutual welcome, as may be supposed, followed the unexpected meeting; and when the first surprise had in some degree subsided, Herbert accompanied Mr. Seymour to his abode,

to hear and to relate all that was immediately interesting to both parties. His own story was soon told. He had arrived in town only two days from Portsmouth, where he had first landed from his voyage. Having been entrusted with papers of importance from the Missionary Board at Tanjore, he had in consequence hastened his return to England a few months earlier than he would otherwise have done; and having for ten years served an honourable campaign of many dangers and arduous toils, he was now come home to enjoy the fruits of his labours, and to enter a more peaceful career in the domestic employments of a country life.

Mr. Seymour then related all that had lately occurred at Llanvair. Herbert was already acquainted with the death of Lady Warton, through the newspapers, and he dwelt feelingly on an event which had thus deprived him of a pleasure, to which he had so earnestly looked forward, of finding the happy and beloved circle at Llanvair Hall still unbroken. Of his poor mother, too, he spoke with fond regret, which led to the subject of Ellen's situation. He deeply compassionated her; and though he was truly rejoiced to find that affliction had been so blest to her, yet he regretted, with all the sympathy of an affectionate heart,

the severe ordeal through which she had been required to pass. He had seen Louis at Portsmouth, and from him he had heard many particulars of friends in whom he was still interested. The subject of Ellen had been but slightly touched upon; but enough was said to convince Herbert, that any attempt to effect a reconciliation would be both unfeeling and injudicious, so honourably did Louis adhere to the promise which he made to his dying father, of never seeing her again. He had resigned his commission in the army, and was then on the eve of returning to Switzerland, which he never afterwards quitted.

Having thus mutually discussed every subject of interest, Mr. Seymour proposed writing home immediately, to announce the arrival of Herbert, fearful that his sudden appearance might otherwise affect the weakened spirits of Ellen; but this Herbert had already done on the day of his landing; the girls were therefore prepared to see him in the course of a few days.

Herbert, now in the flower of manhood, possessed a cultivated mind, and a heart truly governed by the principles of Christianity. The natural susceptibility of his disposition, blended with the buoyancy of an energetic spirit, gave a delicacy to his character which harmonised well

with the manly fortitude of true courage. His career in India had been marked with many a bold enterprise; many a slave owed liberty to his generous and compassionate zeal; and infidels had been awakened to Christianity by the influence of his pious labours and unanswerable persuasions. Beloved by all who were placed under his control, and respected by his superiors, he left India with a name immortalised by the praises of the great and good, rather than by military aggrandisement or ill-acquired wealth. Yet, ambitious only in the cause of virtue, he had attained all for which he had loved to toil, and now returned to claim the reward of domestic retirement, in the land which had always been held in such dear remembrance; satisfied that in the possession of health, competence, and contentment, he had every earthly essential for happiness. Never had he lost his love of simplicity; and often, when obliged to mix in the gay revels of India's dazzling courts, he would sit and muse upon Llanvair, till all its romantic valleys and village scenes would rise in imagination to throw their magic over him; and then might beauty pass by unheeded, while Fanny Seymour, in all her simple loveliness, would wake the past, and bid the present wear no charms for him. But

brief were these revellings amidst the fairy dreams of fancy; his well-governed mind soon roused itself to win in active duty the passport which he knew could alone obtain the prize for which he ran; and then would he yearn for that crown of honour "which to faithful services belong," as he woke to the reality of that deep gulf which lay betwixt his home and him;—that gulf which makes "distance palpable, and return precarious."

Llanvair was a scene of jubilee, as Mr. Seymour and Herbert were welcomed on their return. Joy seemed to be the common feeling amongst its people, as young and old with loud acclamations hailed the stranger to his native home; and "Long live our young master!" was echoed from every cottage dwelling. The earliest fruits and rarest flowers had been gathered by the peasantry of St. Llenards in humble token of rejoicing, and were now scattered on the lawn of the Priory, as Mr. Seymour, followed by Herbert, passed the grateful throng of village eulogists. Poor old Johnson, supported by her tall cane, stood in the porch, that she might be first to meet her "own dear boy;" but the word "welcome!" died upon her lips, and with tears only could she speak the rest. The door of the well-remembered little study was half open; there stood Ellen,

who, overcome with mingled associations, as she heard the joyful shoutings which announced her brother's approach, had fallen on the bosom of the smiling, blushing Fanny; and thus supported by each other, they might be said to look like twin blossoms, drooping beneath a transient summer's rain.

Herbert sprang forward, and raising Ellen from her resting-place, pressed her fondly to his heart; then, taking the hand of Fanny, said, "Never, my own Fanny, may we have to part again!"

The good father looked upon the scene; and even on his manly countenance were betrayed the feelings of a full heart, as he inwardly implored Heaven's best blessing on his children. Smiles, however, soon resumed their gladdening influence; it was only Ellen, who, oppressed with feelings now so new to her, sobbed in excess of joy; but, relieved by the unrestrained indulgence of tears, she went to bed with a lighter heart than she had perhaps known since Herbert had last seen her.

In a few weeks Llanvair was restored to all its wonted cheerfulness, and a bright summer smiled on the union of Herbert and Fanny. They were married amidst the blessings of the people; and Mr. Seymour, having thus lived to see the accom-

plishment of every earthly wish, now seemed prepared to depart in peace, whenever his days had numbered their appointed portion.

Llanvair Hall was prepared for its new tenants under the directions of Mr. Seymour and Ellen, while Herbert took Fanny to England, to see the beauties of that far-famed lawl. They closed their excursion in the Isle of Wight, where their intimacy with the St. Williamses, was again renewed. Herbert did not forget, in the midst of his own prosperity, the misfortunes of his former guardian. He frequently visited Durnford, and endeavoured, by every kind attention, to make Dr. Herbert forget how much he was neglected by others. Mrs. Herbert was no more, and poor Caroline had returned a prodigal to her paternal home. She had, at length, escaped from the cruel tyranny of her husband; and now, lawfully separated from him, she sought, beneath the shelter of a parent's love, a rescue from those sorrows, for which she had so fatally left it. Broken-hearted, indeed, she was now dead to the voice of kindness, nor would she receive consolation, even in the tender sympathy of a father's fond solicitude. She would see no one, beyond those who habitually surrounded her, nor could Dr. Herbert prevail upon her even to leave her room. It was enough, however, that

the unhappy alien had returned to him ; and for the rest, he trusted to the mercy of a pitying God, and hoped that religion, together with time and continued kindness, would gradually restore the sufferer to submission, and effectually bind up the broken heart.

Fanny, although delighted with the scenery around her, and grateful for the attentions which continually awaited her, still thought that no place could be compared to her native home ; and now, anxious to rejoin her father and Ellen, she urged her husband to an immediate return to Llanvair, and to those domestic duties, which were wanting to fill up her cup of happiness. To this, Herbert most willingly assented, and soon again was he hailed by a grateful tenantry, as the beloved and respected master of Llanvair Hall. In the charge of his estate, and in the continued prosecution of Oriental studies, Herbert found ample employment ; while Fanny, in resuming all her village cares, administered to the wants of others, from the blessings which were so largely her portion. The faithful Johnson was immediately reinstated to all the dignities of housekeeper to her young master ; and although too feeble to resume the active duties of her situation, but by proxy, yet she proudly bore its honours, while she loved to

talk of "Master Herbert," as if he were still the infant of her watchful cares.

Ellen, too grateful to leave Mr. Seymour, remained at the Priory, to supply the place of Fanny. On her countenance now sat the smiles of peace, and those who daily saw her, thought that happiness had again resumed its wonted power in her breast; so cheerfully did she engage in all the duties of her situation. But it was only the eye of Heaven, which could see the inward struggle which those smiles had cost her;—could pity the latent sorrow, which preyed upon that wounded heart! It was when no ear could listen to her sighs,—no anxious eye was near to trace the fountain of her tears,—that these were suffered to escape the bosom, in which they lay concealed. For there were moments when, in yielding to the weakness of her own heart, she would indulge in reveries of painful thought. The name of Louis, indeed, had never passed her lips since she had been at Llanvair, but the remembrance of his affection was ever the cherished companion of her thoughts and feelings. Yet this scarcely arose from any fretfulness of disappointment; for it was so tempered with resignation, that she would often wonder why, with so many blessings and still brighter hopes, she could yet feel unhappiness.

But there were seasons, too, when Ellen could almost forget this inward suffering, and, clothed with the comforts of religion, find in its never-failing help, a peace which passeth understanding. When she would take her Bible, and there love to read of Him,—that *Lamb of God*,—who took upon himself the sorrows of mankind; that while He washed away its guilt, with guiltless blood, He might know the power of human suffering, and how to mitigate for us the portion which each of us, on earth, must bear!—who, even in the form of man ascended to His eternal throne of glory,—that, bending over us with ceaseless intercessions in our behalf, He might be worshipped as our Father,—our Brother,—and our God! and that, casting upon Him the burden of all our cares, we might take up His easy yoke, and find a rest from labour!

Another spring returned, and never had Ellen looked or felt more habitually cheerful than now. Her cheek was restored to colour, and her eyes sparkled with returning animation; but soon her voice grew weak, and her form wasted under the power of disease. Her fond brother was the first who ventured to remark the too visible decline; but Fanny turned from the sickly thought, and smiled as she replied, “ Surely, Herbert, you are

unnecessarily alarmed, for never has Ellen looked so rosy,—never appeared more cheerful since her return to Llanvair.” But Herbert only sighed and answered, “Yes, Fanny, but these are not always signs of health: and have you never seen an expiring lamp grow brighter as it dies?”

Anxiety is soon awakened: Fanny now became tenderly watchful of every look from Ellen, and saw too truly, that health had not given that hectic bloom, which she had before so gladly hailed; for, while it animated, it decayed the cheek on which it rested.

Still, Ellen evaded all the inquiries of her watchful nurses, assuring them that although she certainly felt weak, she suffered no pain, nor could she in the least complain of being ill: but at length, every little exertion fatigued her; if she only walked to the Hall, she was obliged to lie down and rest; her appetite failed, and she seemed to be daily sinking to the weakness of infancy. Yet she was always cheerful, and declared that she had never been so happy. One day, as she was sitting with Herbert on the lawn at Llanvair, enjoying the soft breezes of a warm May morning, she asked him if he thought, that our souls immediately partook of the resurrection on its separation from earthly matter? Herbert replied,

“ That it was impossible to ascertain by human speculations, the mysteries which God in His wisdom had seen fit to conceal from us ; but that it was reasonable to suppose, that the soul of the believer would at least rest in the peace of God, if not partake of His glory, until the day of His second coming, as the tree which withers in the winter, to rise no more until the return of spring.”

“ Yes,” said Ellen, looking up thoughtfully, “ the decline and resurrection of nature’s creation, are truly types of our own. As the flower withers from its parent stem, so our strength decays ‘ till stricken by the hand of death,’ the ‘ vital spark’ expires !—but the spirit shall rise again, when the ‘ Lord of Life’ breathes upon the immortal, its immortality !—and then only that which is corruption, is left to perish with its parent earth ! O Herbert !” she added, with an enthusiastic smile, “ and, after all, a thousand centuries in the scale of eternity are but as one short day ! How soon,—how very soon, shall they who live in Christ, triumph in His righteousness, over every sinful thought ;—our endless, holy joy not checked by one sorrowing regret.”

Herbert looked at her countenance, and thought that he had never seen an expression of such an-

gelic serenity ; and yet he sighed as he thought how “very soon,” she might indeed, be called to those realms, for which her soul already seemed prepared. He took her hand, and replied : “The soul, indeed, is truly blest, my Ellen, which can thus rest its hopes, in the sure promises of salvation, in that faith which shall hereafter be accounted for righteousness ! But, dearest Ellen, you must not allow your mind to dwell too constantly on themes which may sometimes elevate us beyond our present strength ; lest your health should fall a sacrifice to your feelings, and the ennobling reverie sink, in human weakness, to melancholy.”

“Melancholy !” exclaimed Ellen, “believe me, Herbert, *that* can never mingle in the contemplations of divine goodness. O brother ! I wish you could have heard Lady Warton, when on a bed of pain and death, tell me how religion would elevate the mind to love and enjoy, even here, the happy privileges of its pure delights !—how it would dim the retrospection of a sad life, and gild our perspective with all the brightness of its own effulgence ! She, too, taught me to beware of melancholy, which true religion cannot know ; but it was that of earthly regrets, in which I once indulged ;—and she told me how much of sin was

mingled in such feelings. So it has proved, for now I am happy,—truly happy, since God follows me even in my loneliness, and subdues all thoughts of self.”

“How much have you, then, to be thankful for,” replied Herbert; “and I, who used to be your Mentor, may now look up to you, dear Ellen, for precept, and wish that my heart were as well governed as your own,—so much have you advanced before me, in all that is good.”

“Oh no, Herbert,” exclaimed Ellen, smiling, “I am not the consistent Christian, which you have ever been; and yet, so far as your assertion is true, be His the glory, who made me what I am; for after all, brother, we can have little to do with our spiritual advancement.”

“True,” replied Herbert, “all holiness proceeds from God; yet on the part of the believer there are *conditions* to fulfil,—although, Ellen, I know that word offends you,—on which rest the grounds of our acceptance; for, did we not *embrace* the *means* of grace,—*through grace itself*,—we should surely rest dead in trespasses and sin. True religion is that beautiful union of faith and works which can never be divided; for we might remain an idle labourer all our lives, under the mere *belief* that Christ is ‘mighty to save;’ and

yet our dead creed avail us nothing, unless we also *laboured here to do His will.*"

"Yes," said Ellen, with firmness, "your argument is true; but still, as of ourselves we cannot even *think a good thought*, it is the Spirit of God that can alone awaken us to a sense of our own insufficiency; for, as without the sun the natural world would be in darkness, so would our souls without the aid of spiritual light."

"Exactly so, my Ellen; we mean the same thing, I am sure, though we may differ a little in the shades of our expression. But, come, we must not talk any more, for I see you are tired. Whatever be our time on earth, I trust that in eternity we shall meet again, to be for ever united in the same Lord, whom we both desire to serve."

"Such is my prayer, dearest Herbert, my fervent prayer," exclaimed Ellen, as a tear stood in her bright eyes;—"and ah! who can tell how soon it may be answered?"

Both now silently returned to the house, equally occupied with serious thoughts. Ellen went to rest, and Herbert to seek Fanny, to discuss with her the change so evident in his sister, from listlessness to extreme energy; and each expressed a deep anxiety as to the result of what before they had scarcely dared avow.

From this time Ellen daily lost strength, although she complained of no pain, neither did she seem in the least aware of her danger. But medical assistance now availed nothing; food no longer nourished, nor did sleep restore. She was removed to Llanvair Hall, in the hope that the change would benefit her; but she was soon confined to her room, and notwithstanding the many remedies so anxiously applied for her restoration, she gradually declined. Still, throughout her illness, never did a Christian evince more lively fruits of the hope and joyful consolations of Christianity. God seemed to be in all her thoughts, and often, when unable otherwise to amuse herself, or to be amused by others, she would lie and sing some favourite hymn,—her feeble voice still sweet in its decay.

One evening Herbert, who had not seen his sister for some hours, softly entered the room; but the watchful Fanny beckoned him to silence, as she whispered that Ellen was now in a sweet sleep, which she hoped would considerably restore her; “for,” added she, “the poor girl was very restless and oppressed before I gave her a composing draught; since which she has slept so quietly, that I have scarcely heard her move or breathe.” Herbert, somewhat alarmed by so

sudden a tranquillity, went to the bed-side, and gently opening the curtain, saw the sweet saint sleeping,—quietly indeed! Her hands were clasped upon her bosom, in the attitude of prayer; a smile yet rested on her lips;—her eyes were scarcely closed,—but the heart beat no more to animate them.

Herbert stood for a moment motionless in the agony of surprise; then again closing the curtain, with his usual self-command, he led Fanny away; and taking her to the next room, where Mr. Seymour was anxiously inquiring of Johnson respecting the invalid, he gently prepared them for the sudden stroke.

Poor Johnson, who was the first to understand him, clasped her hands as, sinking on the chair, she exclaimed, “Oh! who would have thought that I should live to walk upon that dear child’s grave!—but God’s will be done.”

Fanny was deeply affected, and Mr. Seymour, as he bent over her, said, “Well may we mourn for ourselves, if our tears be chastened with submission, for truly is her death our loss; but in Ellen’s name,—oh! rather let us all praise God, that He has thus removed a child of sorrow, and given her, through Christ, the victory over death!”

A plain marble tablet now marks the grave of Ellen, bearing the dates of her age and death, with the following inscription :

She was !—and yet what boots it now to tell
What only *has* been ?—like a rose she was,
On which the poison of a baneful blast
Had breathed its influence,—and ere it bloom'd,
Scath'd the young bud,—then left it to decay !

She is !—but who can tell how blest is she,
Who, rais'd by grace, is chosen of the Lord ?
Like a fair lily which had nearly died,
Revived by Him whose influence is life ;
She lives for ever,—a celestial plant,
Fed from the streams of everlasting love !

CONCLUSION.

SINCE thus, as we have seen in the history of Ellen, Influence is so important in its consequences,—so awful in its effects!—how does it behove us all to make that which we each possess subservient to the cause of religion, that others may not hereafter trace their faults in awful condemnation to our own!

But should any answer, that individually *they* can have no *influence* in the world—that *their* conduct cannot affect the welfare of another—their precepts have no power to reform,—let me ask such, however humble, or poor, or ignorant they may be, if in their own little circle they are not linked to some chain of kindred or of social interest? for so does every human being cling to those who love him, and hang on the will of another! Then, when we have done our best to reach the goal of 'salvation, the others too may find it; on those who go astray—and not on us—will fall the penalty of their disobedience! And

now I will say, in the words of Mr. Seymour's address to young people, "First seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you; but enter not into the paths of the wicked, for the way of the transgressors is hard." But if the counsels of the Lord are unheeded, if you will not seek Him in whom you may find eternal life,—if, regardless of His precepts, you hold the sacred volume of truth only as a "*sealed book*," then indeed is *my* voice too feeble to be heard—*my* simple Influence can avail you nothing.

C. A.

THE END.

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